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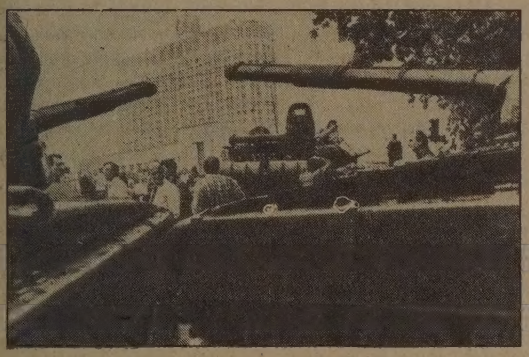
34/92 NEW TIMES AUGUST
INTERNATIONAL

POLITICS

TRENDS
V.Kulistikov
A YEAR AFTER THE CRASH OF COMMUNISTS: A "GREY ZONE" INSTEAD OF THE RED EMPIRE 3

POLITICAL LIFE
K. Lyubarsky
A STOLEN REVOLUTION? 4

4



Tanks against the people. August 1991

COVER STORY
M. Shakina
HE PREFERS TO STAY IN THE BACKGROUND 9

9

"A man who can wait"

ECONOMICS

DOSSIER
DECREE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION ON MEASURES TO ASSIST AND RATIONALIZE INSOLVENT (BANKRUPT) STATE ENTERPRISES AND ON SPECIAL PROCEEDINGS APPLICABLE TO THEM 15

RUSSIA
S. Rakovsky
NEW NEIGHBOURS, NEW PROBLEMS 19

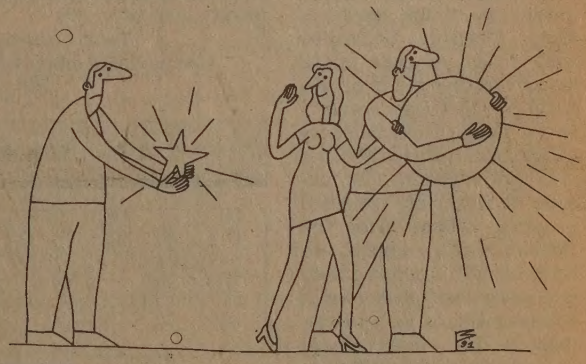
MASS MEDIA
P. Gutiontov
HOW TO EVALUATE MORAL DAMAGE 23

INTERNATIONAL

LAW
A. Mikhlin and S. Kovalyov
AMNESTY 24

ESSAY
L. Miller
A LONG HOLIDAY IN 1949 30

30



SPORTS
V. ZHITOMIRSKY
HER WORKPLACE IS BY THE RING 32

LETTERS (2), **THIS WEEK** (12), **OUTLOOK** (22), **PEOPLE** (28)

"Hurry up, but slowly"

Some of your articles remind one of war communiques or analytical reviews by military experts. The impression is that the former Soviet Union is sinking into an abyss of revolts, conflicts and internecine wars. I am afraid this image will prove and is already proving not to be very attractive to respectable Western businessmen who search for areas of solid investment. Moreover, I think this image is simply wrong because it is distorted by journalists' craving for sensationalism. A short while ago I visited the fascinating republic of Belarus (as Byelorussia is officially called now), the smallest of the Slav states in the Commonwealth. I saw no great upheaval there, no convulsive attempts at rapid progress, and no unexpected u-turns. The political and economic situation in the republic is on the whole stable. Belarus leaders say: "Hurry up, but slowly." They do not want a repetition of the horrible Polish experience of shock therapy.

Economic indicators in Belarus are better than in other republics. To my knowledge, Belarus has moved towards protecting foreign capital much more so than other states of the Commonwealth. Former employees of the republic's State Planning Committee were invited to draw up "a smooth programme of privatization for eight years ahead." I am not a great expert but to my mind it looks quite realistic. It is also very important that, despite its outwardly unhurried progress, Belarus is the first Commonwealth republic to have adopted a law on private land ownership. I think foreign investors should rush to that republic first. Minsk should rightfully be considered the virtual, and not just the formal capital of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the beacon for the other, not so stable regions which are now in disarray.

Mark Winter,
civil aviation pilot
Paris

Mutual desire can find a way out

It is known that Mercury, the god of trade, was always at odds with Mars, the god of war. History has not devised a better means of strengthening mutually respectful, beneficial and, therefore, reliable ties than trade and economic cooperation.

Our newspapers report that Bulgaria's warehouses are stocked with various goods which could be put on the Russian market. They are not worthless goods, but foodstuffs, drugs, tins and clothing. As far as I know, the population of the former Soviet Union badly needs them. The trouble is that our trade has been crippled by the insolvency of our trade partners from the Commonwealth. It turned out, however, that the prospects are not so bleak. Our businessmen have recently learned with enthusiasm that Russia will supply a million tons of oil to Bulgaria. Besides, many regard as attractive the idea of supplying Bulgarian goods to Russia under guaranteed payments through banks in third countries. In short, when there is a common interest a way out can always be found to mutual benefit.

Teodor Ivanov,
commercial employee
Pleven

The Crimea must be sovereign

I think your women writers have proved superior to many politicians in forecasting Russia's relations with Ukraine and the Crimea. What is important is that they offer practical advice on how to solve the contradictions. Russia, Ukraine and the Crimea must reach a sensible agreement on cooperation and stop disputing the lessons of history. The course of events after the break-up of the USSR suggests a conclusion that the Crimea has the right to be not only a sovereign territory but also a sovereign state. An agreement must ensure that no problems would arise for the Crimea in establishing friendly and allied relations with the Russian Federation and Ukraine.

Anatoly Karpus,
children's doctor
Ryazan

Archives will reveal the truth

The International Committee of the Fourth International demands that it should be given unlimited access to all documents relating to the mass execution of Socialists and opponents of the Stalin regime. Making this appeal, the Fourth International, founded by Lev Trotsky in 1938, comes out as the present-day representative of Trotskyism, the Marxist-Leninist teaching which was the main target of the Stalin regime. Modern researchers in the history of Trotskyism believe that three million people were executed or died in prisons and camps in 1937 and 1938. According to conservative estimates, over one million people became victims of the great terror.

Before and after the assassination of Lev Trotsky the Soviet government attempted to hinder the activity of the Fourth International by smuggling in provocateurs and spies like Mark Zborowski (alias Etiene). It is possible that anti-Trotskyist actions still continue up to now. Whatever the truth might be, it can only be disclosed thanks to state archives which contain documents about the assassination of Socialist leaders. The break-up of the Soviet Union does not absolve the Russian government of the responsibility for the keeping of these secret archives.

David North,
editor of the *Bulletin of the Fourth International*
Detroit, USA

Don't worry, Russia will survive

Democrats have been nervous of late. Yeltsin has been travelling throughout Russia. Rutskoi, Khasbulatov, Popov and Poltoranin have their horns locked in battle. Deputies – shame! – are caught in misdemeanour. And, it seems, everyone fears Russia's ruin. Don't worry, Russia will survive, as long as it doesn't slide into cannibalism. But if Grachev, a favourite of Yeltsin, cancels the alternative service and deferment of military service for students that will be our ruin, because Russia lives on the hopes of its mothers to see their grandchildren alive.

Tamara Burashnikova
Ufa

THE WAY I SEE IT

Drawing by Victor Bogorad

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A year after the crash of Communsits: a "grey zone" instead of the Red Empire

Celebrations like those organized by Russian authorities a year ago on the occasion of finally crushing communism after the August putsch, would be hard to arrange in many, if not most localities liberated by Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin from the Red Empire oppression. This is not explained by the economic crisis inevitable in any transitional period. The major reason for it is that an individual human life is in greater danger now than it was before the crash of communism. Sarajevo has lost more lives of its residents now than it did during Nazi invasion. Kabul is destroyed far beyond the worst intentions of Soviet invaders when they fought against the mujahedin. Fighting are Russians and Moldovans, Armenians and Azerbaijanians; Georgians can't stop their civil war, while Tajiks do their utmost to start theirs. The process of disintegration continues. So far only Czechs and Slovaks divorse, fortunately, in a civilized way. The risk of dangerous international confrontations is growing in the Balkans – the appearance of an independent Macedonia displeases Greece but inspires its rival, Turkey, thus creating problems for the West European and Atlantic alliances.

On the global scale, the danger of an unauthorized use of nukes has increased. Chaos among the "remnants of a Great Army" and the spreading of its centres of control to sovereign ex-Soviet republics aggravates the problem of stability.

In attempts to solve international conflicts by diplomatic means, the factor of force becomes increasingly dominant. For the time being, the UN sanctions the use of force only after much debate. But international, or more precisely, Western or, still more precisely, American armed interference is more and more often cited as the only remedy in the conflict areas themselves.

The crash of the communist organization of Soviet society has left not the air of freedom, but a dangerous vacuum behind it. No substitute for the old methods of suppressing anarchy and violence have been so far found either in communist countries or in international organizations. This was a surprise to the world political elite which had been accustomed to acting in a settled atmosphere which allows stereotype decisions. But replacing politicians is no quicker than changing political methods.

According to a widespread historical version, in 1945 in Yalta, Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill, the victors over Hitler, agreed to leave a certain "grey zone" when they divided spheres of influence in the world. An instability in foreign policy orientations, a free play of interests and confrontation were admitted in this zone. At first Greece and Yugoslavia were included in this "grey zone," but they soon found themselves integrated into the Western defence system. After the fall of the old colonial empires the Third World, the source of instability and regional conflicts, became such a "grey zone."

Now the former Red Empire which has failed to learn to live by the rules of Western Society seems to have become the "grey zone." It threatens all and everything indiscriminately, and therefore it's particularly dangerous like a mysterious natural calamity. The "grey zone" lacks the least of the required pillars of order: stable state borders and internationally approved norms of internal political struggle. This leads to the conviction that this desolate and rather absurdly built quarter of the world requires a strong sheriff.

Many are busy construing a "sheriff mechanism." In the territory of the former USSR this activity has already resulted in the interference of multinational peacemaking forces in Moldova and South Ossetia in the interests of restoring peace there. A similar scenario is slowly actualizing in Yugoslavia and is mentioned as a means of salvation for Afghanistan, Somalia and Ethiopia. But these are only the first steps. Hot spots of conflicts can be removed by force, but how to remove the reasons for them?

Vladimir Kulistikov

A stolen revolution?

Post-August Russia found herself all alone within uncustomary borders and faced with new difficulties, however, without the socialist choice and empire grandeur

When on the morning of August 19, exactly one year ago, I, seated in the study of this news magazine's editor-in-chief, derived esthetic delight from the strains of Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* emanating from the continually switched-on TV set, I found it not that easy to imagine that twelve months hither, I would be able to sum up the results in the pages of this magazine, not, for instance, in the *Samizdat* or émigré media. My philistinic subconscious fawningly suggested that "it was all over," yet on the other hand, reason objected, intimating that only now everything was really seriously beginning.

Hence I think the Number One result of the past year is the fact that reason was proved right. The result is not that trite as might seem, as history tells us that reason has far from always been proved right.

The August 19–21 events may rightly be qualified as a revolution not because of the barricades, the tanks, the crowded streets, and the underground radio, but because they triggered off a long sequence of developments, big and small, that have irrevertibly changed the country's entire image.

When endeavouring today to sum up the results and furnish an overall estimate of what we have arrived at, now that the first revolutionary year has ended, one may of course classify the various facts, assess each individually and attempt an average, with the strategic arms cut a plus, but Chechen a minus, with the introduction of a free ruble rate a plus, but the Kuriles a minus, with Ossetia a plus, but the reciprocal writing off of state enterprise debts a minus, with Gaidar a plus, but Volsky a minus, etc. Though another may arrange the pluses and minuses differently, the overall picture will nevertheless present a mosaic and the overall estimate will be hazy.

Generally, to judge from the Russian media, the overall assessment would rather be on the side of the minuses, whether we take the radicals or the rightists. We hear it said that the "revolution has been stolen," that "the reforms have flopped," and that "national interests have been sold down the river." Some even deplore their having stood up for Russia's White House a year ago.

However, I think all that most unfair. Their eyes blinded by daily cares the pessimists fail to see the main thing which is that for the first time in 75 years we are now living in a normal country.

Naturally I well realize that this statement may only irritate people who have not been getting pay for some three months now, who purchase a gas squirt to protect themselves against mugging, or who wondering whether they can afford an extra carton of milk. Consequently I feel obliged to explain what I actually mean.

The good versus the better

A normal country does not necessarily mean it is having it good. However that country is normal, where how you live today and how you will live tomorrow depends above all on you. In that abnormal country in which we were living the last 75 years, having it good was possible, but only for people whom the tops allowed and to the extent allowed.

Reversion to normal was due to the first of the two destiny-shaping post-August events, notably the exit of the "CPSU state." A major development that followed was the resumption of political life which, despite the immaturity of the forms it has thus far assumed is nonetheless genuine political life. We understand, for example, that the objectives targeted by Gaidar and Burbulis and those social segments upon which they rely totally differ from the objectives Volsky or Vladislavlev set themselves, while as for Baburin and Sterligov, what they have their eyes on is entirely different from either of the aforementioned. The stand each of us takes, the support each of us gives either Gaidar or Volsky or Sterligov, will largely determine how each of us will live tomorrow, which incidentally is not at all foreordained. Hence each of us may choose correctly or wrongly.

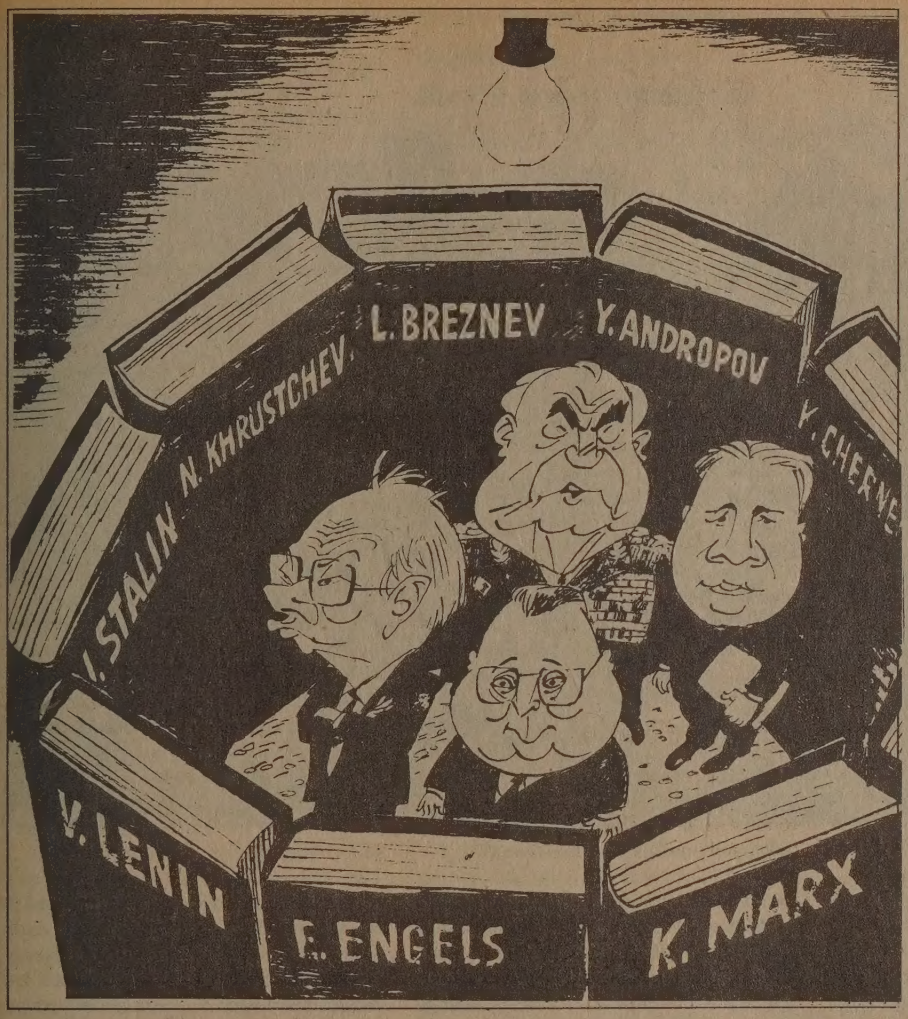
In the recent past, prior to that month of August, the power struggle within the Soviet leadership could on no account be called political life. As was the case in the now forgotten Pogodin or Surov plays it was but "a struggle in which the good fought the better," with the venue in which this struggle proceeded strictly contoured for all parties involved. No political life but political intrigue, with the mastiffs fighting it out under the carpet. The struggle proceeded between "the like-minded" with the only objective how best to maintain the "socialist choice" and the power of "the party that initiated *perestroika*." Nowadays when the Central Committee and KGB archives are gradually coming into the public domain, we clearly see that until very recently, even the ways and means whereby this struggle was waged differed but little from those employed prior to the start of *perestoika*.

As for the opportunities that the man-in-the street had to influence at least the outcome of this struggle, let alone modify its substance, they were minimal. Scarcely can anyone say that Pavlov replaced Ryzhkov and the "main trends" the "Abalkin reforms" as due essential changes in society to tilting the political line-up. Merely a "still better" Pavlov had taken over from an unreservedly "good" Ryzhkov.

Day after day we felt that we depended on the "leading and guiding force" – whether "before" or "after" the repeal of Article 6 is of no significance. Indeed, that "feeling of profound gratitude" to the architect of *perestroika* for the bestowed liberties, with respect to whose inadequate intensity we often reproached ourselves and one another, strikingly illustrates that. Reminders that we were "indebted" for our freedom failed even to provoke any inner resistance.

"Stockholm syndrome"

Our protests and the street rallies, whereby we struggled against the powers-that-were likewise revealed a constant, even though adverse, dependence upon the force against which we struggled. Even the national miner strikes consummating this struggle basically sought exclusively to make the government "give," give" and "give" again. In other words – raise pay, and improve supplies and working conditions. Only at the start of 1991 did the climate tangibly change as if foretelling the storm clouds of August, with the strikers seeking an active not passive part in the social process.



Drawing by Vladimir Mochalov

Psychologists studying terrorism describe what they qualify as the "Stockholm syndrome." This means that after some time hostages captured by terrorists begin to identify themselves with these terrorists, "understand" their "rightness," and sympathize with them. The bond can be so firm that now and again it lingers for long after the hostage is released. Evidently a society trapped by totalitarianism may well experience something akin to the "Stockholm syndrome."

We are only setting out, and the time for adaptation to freedom will necessarily be painful. It is hard to realize that freedom above all comprises one's own freedom of choice. It is still harder to realize that freedom implies some self-denial in the sense that freedom to brandish one's fists ends where it encroaches upon the nose of one's neighbour. Nevertheless with time that will come.

I personally think the public's emerging new psychological attitude encouraging. Although Yeltsin's heroism during the August events could have well provoked impassioned gratitude as liberator, that did not ensue. The post-August Yeltsin escaped that period of grateful worship, that the early-*perestroika* Gorbachev experienced (Yeltsin acquired his measure of worship during his pre-presidential period, however, not as gratitude for what he had done, but as credit which he had to foot). Yeltsin's prestige as the country's top authority rests not on slavish gratitude, but on a feeling of partnership, with the President voicing society's vital wants and with society in turn backing him for that, and only for that! The measure of society's gratitude to Yeltsin dovetails with the measure of his own personal gratitude to society and as the first state leader in the post-communist society he may rightly take pride in that.

One more token of society's new mentality is the manifest decline in rallies and strikes. I see that not as a symptom of social fatigue, but, on the contrary, as a symptom of social maturity, whereby that sense of adverse dependence on the "bosses" is overcome. Rallies and strikes as a day-to-day routine emergency that are not due to some form or other of political activity, betoken a sick society in much the same manner as Samizdat and the underground leaflets. Currently available to society are other options for economic and political self-expression. Though they are not always what one would want and though they are not always ably exploited, they are already used. That series of public opinion polls conducted over recent months has stably indicated that the proportion of people planning to carve out a place for themselves in the new conditions is many times greater than the proportion of those preferring vociferous protest.

What is the "Great Russia"?

A second crucial development of the "post-August" year, which has beneficially affected the state of society, is the USSR's disintegration. What I see as most encouraging here is society's acceptance of that as natural. The anxieties felt are exclusively pragmatic, implying boundaries, refugees, and the breakdown of economic links, and are not associated with spreadeaglism.

However, there were definite grounds for fearing such spreadeaglism. The August revolution was keynoted in no small degree by the desire to "revive the Great Russia." This motto, which Yeltsin himself uttered in speeches and statements made at the time, was subsequently echoed again and again at rallies and in the media. More than that, some heedless steps that followed upon this "revival" campaign – as for instance, presidential press secretary Pavel Voshchanov's boun-

Moscow, August 1991

daries statement – intimated that that may have been not only so many words.

Fortunately enough, Yeltsin with his inherent ability to spot and remedy mistakes, cut short rather quickly the "Great Russia" rhetoric. He evidently realized that an apologia from a triumphant victor was inappropriate for a real politician. Hence for a time the "Great Russia" thesis became the property of such sideliners as Zhirinovsky.

However, now this thesis seems to have gained a second lease on life, due to the efforts of the so-called right-wing opposition, notably the Russian National Sobor, the Russian People's Assembly and the Russian Popular Alliance. Regretfully the "Great-Russians" are now and again unexpectedly backed by democrats, which is most strikingly illustrated and which is for me personally most depressing – by such people as Yury Vlasov and Oleg Rumyantsev, whose totally different social attitudes have dovetailed on the "Great Russia" thesis.

Still one does not have the impression that despite the eloquent rhetoric the "Great Russia" concept has "won over the masses." This is evidently due in no small degree to the circumstance that none have proved able to lucidly explain what they personally mean by the sonorous notion of the "rebirth of the Great Russia" – provided we discount the fixation not to surrender "our" Southern Kuriles. Luckily enough, the "revival" is more a shibboleth of ambitious politicians than an expression of public sentiment.

In fact nobody, except Zhirinovsky, dares or seeks to say that he dreams of a revived empire, though there was never any other chapter of "greatness" in our history. Implied apparently is rather not the regaining of territory or the restoration of the social regime, but something more abstract, a concept which nonetheless may, given certain conditions, develop into a material force.

"A pungent sense of emptiness"

I shall not bother in these pages to discuss the notorious "Russian idea" not only because this is a special topic of its own, which should not be dealt with in passing, but above all because there is really nothing to discuss. Though I may once again invoke the ire of Shafarevich, I will nevertheless say that the Russian idea *per se* no longer exists. No wonder no contemporary "Great-Russian" has ever bothered to explicitly say what this idea implies nowadays on the threshold of the 21st century, after all the historical ups and downs Russia has experienced.

Otherwise attempts witnessed to that end mainly proceed from the opposites – not Jewish, not Masonic – and that can scarcely be viewed as productive. It should be noted as redounding to the Russian society's credit today that despite the spate in the Black Hundred press, attempts to channel it into anti-Semitism have affected, if at all, exclusively the fringes of the public mentality. Nor does the exotic notion of wedding Russian Orthodoxy to Mohammedism, which the newspaper *Den* (The Day) touts, enjoy any special popularity.

Let us return to the sources of the idea, to fit it as it had initially been, within the scheme of present-day reality. Berdyayev most tersely and fully formulated the "19th-century Russian theme" when he said: "This is a tempestuous desire for progress, for revolution, for the latest results of world civilization and for socialism, yet a pro-

foundly pungent sense of the emptiness, ugliness, and philistinic callous substance of all the results of world progress, revolutions, civilization and all else."

Tell the contemporary young Moscovite or Petersburgian that today!

The 20th century has shown that in the epoch keynoted by the rise of world communications at every level, the national "idea" merely indicates the social sickness of the nation in question. It may fester merely as a perturbing symptom, but given certain conditions, it may endanger the very lifestring of the "idea" nation.

I never seem to have heard of a "Swiss" or "British" idea. If we are now beginning to forget that idea of ours that is a good thing.

After the USSR's disintegration, Russia has found herself all alone within uncustomary boundaries and faced with problems that had never confronted her at any time in her history. On the other hand, it is no longer burdened by the problems that paralyzed her over decades and centuries, notably the socialist choice and empire grandeur. There is nothing for us to revive today. What we must do is to do something new, which fortunately enough would be new only for us, not for the world community, whose experience we may draw upon, even if somewhat clumsily at the outset.

Generally speaking, the results of the first post-August year are not that bad. However, that does not mean I wish to predict early economic stabilization and the start of rising living standards by December, February, or April.

On the contrary, I think we are still crisis-bound, and that the economic situation will improve not that soon. We need to turn the cumbersome economic machine right about face, which it would be foolish to think could be done within a few months. The government and the President committed a tactical error when they periodically specified deadlines for expected stabilization, although it was plain in advance that these deadlines would not be met, that they would have to be put off again and again. Instead of such naive efforts to allay fears, they ought to have not only proclaimed their programme, but to have continually explained in detail the purpose of what was being done and the immediate and remote prospects of reform. A proclaimed economic reform cannot be implemented without the active involvement of the population, as therein its purpose, and consequently the population must have an absolutely clear picture of what the reformer wants to achieve.

Does Russia's revival signify the revival of the defence industries?

Westerners do not hide from a sick person that he or she has cancer. The sick person must clearly realize that an operation is inevitable, that it is hazardous, and that post-operational rehabilitation will be protracted and unpleasant but that offers the only chance for survival. Though a sedative is far more pleasant, it is bound to bring death in its train. Unfortunately the analogy is overly apt.

However, the cancer with which we are afflicted is not incurable, and the realization that that is so represents one more positive result of the first post-August year. Thus the reforms initiated in January are changing even but slowly and not quite consistently the line-up of economic and, consequently, political forces in the country. I do not think the movement along this right road can be checked today. Indeed, what force could do that?

Meanwhile the CPSU's restoration is not to be mentioned even as a joke. Its exit is best demonstrated by the Constitutional Court's "trial of the century," for which the level of public interest has currently descended to the level shown with respect to the trial of the Rostov ripper.

Spontaneous rebellions were predicted with an obtrusive regularity from the very start of the reform, but thus far none of these prophecies has materialized. Nor are there any signs that wholesale indignation may spike future changes, for as was noted earlier, society no longer feels it is the state's ward.

Further a military takeover attended by the coming to power of a strong man likewise seems hardly probable. The army is demoralized and disrupted, with no popular generals under whom to try to seize control of this vast land in its current state of ferment; for that matter the lessons of August have far from been forgotten.

What appears far more on the cards is a quiet *nomenklatura* coup, with the reformers ousted from the power structures by "executives with practical know-how," the placemen of the military-industrial complex. Currently this danger is traditionally associated with such personages as Volsky, and with such public associations as the "Civic Alliance" or with such newly rising state structures as Skokov's Security Council. They are indeed formidable adversaries. More may be expected in the foreseeable future, for as Gaidar observed recently: "There is a whole queue of claimants to national leadership."

Yet though this option is quite tangible, it cannot abort reforms, it can only substantially retard them. The numerous articles and interviews from the "executives with practical expertise," firstly Volsky, and the "Main Lines" of the economic programme that the "Civic Alliance" has presented clearly demonstrate that the new claimants to leadership, in effect, have nothing to offer. As one hitherto popular song went, "as long as our country survives, we'd have no other cares." Which is what Volsky would have us believe in an interview and which he reinterpreted in the "Main Lines" as comprising "Russia's revival (sic!) with the preservation of sophisticated technology as the nucleus of the economy," that we are to understand as the revival of the defence industries.

Coup victims' funeral. Blood has not been shed in vain *ITAR-TASS photos*

Reform is no luxury

Those "executives with practical expertise" indeed learned to manage and hope that their know-how will assist them, once they regain power. But they fail to realize that they acquired this know-how in a totally different country, which had an effectively operating system of "party guidance," with entrenched stable economic links on the scale of a unitarian state and decades of the indoctrinated tradition of unreserved subordination. Earlier the medium for effective "practical economic management" had been well fertilized by the years of terror.

Now this regime for the most favoured treatment of "pragmatic economic executives" is no longer there, hence they are bound to come a cropper. They may of course take over, but they will not be able to abort the reforms. The most they may achieve is to substantially impede these reforms, perhaps for several years to come.

However, they do not have these years, even months, available. The luxury of one more experiment cannot be allowed. The only effective way to forestall a development of that order is to radicalize and expedite reforms. By indecision, inconsistency and concession the government will not pacify, but merely egg on its opponents.

The reforms must inevitably be more and more revolutionary in character. I have already had occasion to note that the presidential edicts banning the CPSU are in effect revolutionary decrees, whose legality derives from them. Another revolutionary act was the dissolution of the USSR by means of the Belovezh Accords. There is no question that were Russia's Constitutional Court to include within its jurisdiction matters pertaining to the lot of the Union, some MPs would attempt to dispute, not without some ground, the constitutionality of the documents that Yeltsin, Kravchuk and Shushkevich signed. It is already more than plain that we are indebted to the Belovezh Accords for having saved us from a bloodbath that would have ensued on quite constitutional grounds had attempts been made to keep the Union together by force.

Sans the "CPSU state"

Though I have no notion as to the forms the next revolutionary steps may assume, I am convinced that they must be found and hence will be found. The revolution currently taking place in this country is as it were "from the top," but it differs in principle from that revolution which was so much a buzz term in the Gorbachev era. The present revolutionary reformers were mandated by the legitimate August "revolution from below," a mandate Gorbachev never had.

The contour of the next step of massive democratic privatization is already assuming definite shape. More complex is the next step, the "antifeudal" land reform, and in this field the President will need to draw upon all his political expertise not only to proclaim it, but to get it implemented.

The third revolutionary move which is inevitable, is a fundamental overhaul of the operative legal system, firstly a constitutional reform. Complaints that laws are inactive, are not abided by, are common enough. No wonder, as responsible is not only the circumstance that the power structure is too weak. In a society not run by dictators, laws are kept only when the legal system as a whole is, firstly, not contradictory and, secondly, organically conforms to society's current state. Legislation will regulate the life of society only when it reflects this society.

Over the past year our society has gone so far ahead that it is now out of question to live according to the inherited laws of the "CPSU state." All realize that and the idea of a new constitution and a legal reform is uppermost in minds. However, it is becoming harder and harder to translate this idea into practice, as we have inherited not only the legislation but also the legislator. This is a vicious circle which must be ruptured somehow.

In this fashion, step by step, we shall need to follow the only rational road of enhancing the normalcy of our society. We must completely forget the luxury of experimentation and the dream of an ideal state. After all only the little boy Arthur in the Strugatsky brothers' *Roadside Picnic*, who entertained that childish dream of "free happiness for all with no one overlooked!"

Kronid Lyubarsky

SOCIOLOGICAL SURVEY

Prof. Boris Grushin's Vox Populi poll

Tell me who your enemies are

Who would you call your Number One enemy?

(Polled were 934 Muscovites. Results are presented in percentage to the total polled)

No enemies 55
There are enemies 28
including
Entrepreneurs and representatives of the "new" economy 4
Underworld criminals and the mafia 3
Communists 3
Democrats and representatives of the "new" power 2
Partocrats and representatives of the "old" power 2
Bureaucrats and representatives of the "old" economy 1
Nationalists and chauvinists 1
Others 4
Don't know 17

Consequently, one out of ever four Muscovites believes he or she has enemies and naturally expects a hostility from one or another social segment, specific persons or even abstract forces.

Men revealed this propensity more than women, with 33 percent to 24. The higher the educational level and the older the person, the more was hostility anticipated.

Naturally active persons, such as executives and the personnel of private businesses, joint ventures and stock companies, said they had more enemies than, for instance, housewives, with 35 and 36 percent to 20 respectively. Among Jews the proportion taking a sceptical view of personal safety was more than among others, with 45 percent believing they had enemies and 43 percent that they did not. Conversely, the overwhelming majority of Tatars, some 70 percent, feel quite at ease in Moscow.

He prefers to stay in the background

Yuri Skokov, Secretary of the Security Council, avoids publicity. It only remains to guess what kind of person he is, where he came from, and what can be expected of him

"Yuri Vladimirovich does not care much for being interviewed," I was told at the receptionist's office of Secretary of the Security Council Yuri Skokov, whom I had applied to for a talk. The receptionist recommended reading *Nezavisimaya Gazeta,* which "will tell you all you want to know about the Security Council." What I was interested in, however, was not the Security Council, but its secretary. "Where can I get more information about him, his *curriculum vitae,* for instance?" I insisted. Skokov's aide recommended ringing the following day.

On the following day I was in for the following message: "Yuri Vladimirovich has refused to give his *curriculum vitae.* I could no longer restrain myself and burst out laughing right into the telephone receiver.

I have found out Skokov's background from other sources.

Not a single public statement

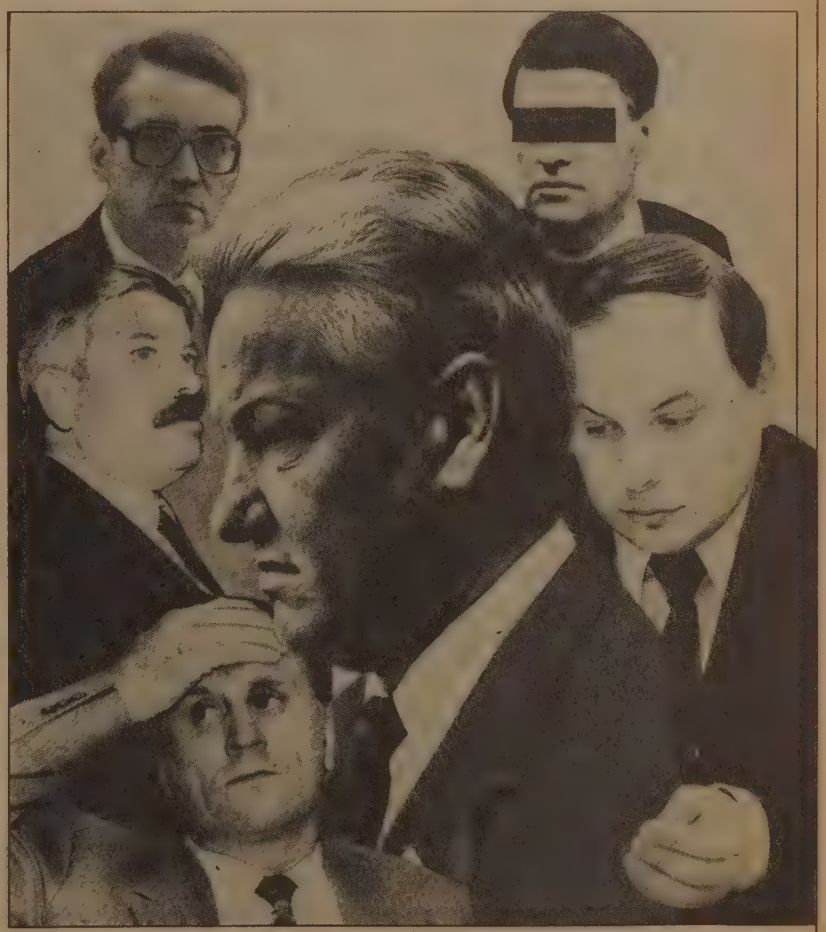
"He doesn't like putting his neck out. This is a deliberate policy," a parliamentary told me. Confirmations galore. In 1989, when Yuri Skokov was running for a people's deputy of the USSR in Moscow's Dzerzhinsky District, his rivals included, among others, Yuri Nikulin and Vitaly Korotich. At a precinct election meeting, representatives from Pamyat society staged an obstruction to the editor-in-chief of the *Ogonyok* magazine. I remember democratic candidates walking out of the assembly hall in protest against rigging election results. It is only the toughest democratic activists of that election campaign who remember how Yuri Skokov had made it to power – slowly but steadily.

"It was a setup, he was backed by the regional CPSU committee and by all the powers-that-were." In the Dzerzhinsky District, the democrats decided to boycott the elections. They are still convinced that the elections have been rigged. Whether this is so makes no difference today, because the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR is no more today, and neither is the USSR, for that matter. All this belongs to history. What continues to this day is the political career of Yuri Skokov which had its start in 1989.

After he had been elected a people's deputy, his democratic rivals had the intention of keeping an eye on his activity at the Congress and then at the Supreme Soviet, but he gave them no chance – throughout the time of the Congress' existence, Yuri Skokov did not speak once, on any issue. He did not put his neck out.

At the USSR Supreme Soviet, Skokov was a member of the Economic Reform Committee, but was not active there, made his appearance sporadically, but each time he appeared was calculated to produce an effect, his colleagues recall. At the end of 1989 and at the beginning of the 1990s, the unity of the USSR was at stake. Skokov reacted to the situation very keenly, which was manifested in his statements at the Committee; he sounded like someone who knew what course of action to take, but who also realized the impossibility of taking it.

The KVANTEMP interbranch state association, of which Skokov was general director, had his subsidiaries in the Baltic republics. The developments there affected him directly and, according to eyewitnesses, Skokov could not resist the temptation of looking at the situation there through the prism of his own production interests. He had no scruples about using the chances his capacity of a deputy gave him to deal with his company's problems. That was also the case later, at the Council of Ministers of the Russian Federation, where Ivan Silayev, Chairman of the Council of Ministers, made Skokov his deputy in 1990.



Drawing by Sergei Khasabov

Skokov became Silayev's deputy before anyone knew it. Public attention was focused then on a "new star" – Grigory Yavlinsky, another deputy of the government chairman – who, incidentally, told the world the story about ten million currency rubles Yuri Skokov had made his association's property right upon assuming his high position.

Going all the way from general director to Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Union's largest republic is not an ordinary career. Many think that Skokov impressed Yeltsin when the latter was first secretary of the Moscow city party committee. Skokov did not have much time for getting intimate with the President – no more than 18 months. Others attribute Skokov getting into Yeltsin's good books to a later period, to the spring of 1991, when Skokov accompanied Yeltsin in his Siberian tour instead of Ivan Silayev who could not go for reasons now forgotten.

Skokov was "feverishly active" on that trip, eye-witnesses say.

Be that as it may, the period of slightly over a year for which the two worked together in Moscow left no bitter taste in Yeltsin's mouth. Skokov did not "put his neck out" then, either, and took no part in the campaign of baiting Yeltsin, which had got under way after the October 1987 Plenary Meeting of the CPSU Central Committee.

"A man who can wait"

Yuri Skokov was born in Vladivostok in 1938 and graduated from the Leningrad Electrical Engineering Institute as a radio engineer. Upon graduation (1961) he went to work at Kalinin-based Research Institute No. 2 of the USSR Defence Ministry. In 1963-66, Skokov went through a post-graduate course at the Institute and qualified for the degree of a Candidate of Technology. The theme of his Candidate's thesis was classified, of course.

At Institute No. 2, Skokov made it to the position of a senior research associate, and in 1969 moved to Krasnodar to fill the post of a department chief of the third Krasnodar branch of the All-Union Current Sources Research Institute (VNIIIT). (Incidentally, Skokov's father is rumoured to have been the KGB chief for the Krasnodar Territory. My inquiry into the affair was blocked by Skokov's staff.) All his further career was linked up with the VNIIIT. In 1970-1973, for example, he acted as department chief, and for eight years – from 1978 to 1986 – as director of Krasnodar's Saturn experimental plant belonging to the Institute. In 1986, he was appointed general director of the Institute and Chairman of the Board of the KVANTEMP interbranch state association (Moscow). In 1990, Skokov became Silayev's deputy.

The matter-of-fact lines of a biography imply a lot. What strikes the eye is that Skokov has climbed all the rungs of the military-industrial complex hierarchic ladder. He is a military-industrial general director to the marrow of his bones. Second: it follows from his *curriculum vitae* that he is not much concerned about trappings or gnawed with vanity. He calmly bears coexistence in the shade of an indefinite status – otherwise how could he have been a "deputy" for eight years? He is restrained, and his timing is good. An acquaintance of mine describes him as "a man who can wait."

After the Silayev government had resigned, Yeltsin "suspended" Skokov by giving him the insignificant post of Secretary of the Council for the Affairs of the Federation and Territories under the President of the Russian Federation. In that post, Skokov held the rank of the State Councillor. Since early last year, there ascended the star of Gennady Burbulis, who put forward the idea of the State Council. According to eye-witnesses, the relationships between Skokov and Burbulis were fine until Burbulis formed a government, leaving Skokov out. Incidentally, Skokov's appointment was opposed by the Democratic Russia faction, which Yeltsin owed a great deal to and which put forward the following condition: "Neither Skokov nor Lobov."

Skokov's and Burbulis' Russian White House offices faced one another before they moved to the Staraya Ploshchad. The door of the Burbulis office practically never closed – he was said to have set a visitor-reception record. It is rumoured that when Skokov went out of that door, after a routine democratic "come-together," his face bore a disgusted expression. He was obviously shocked by the Democrats' looseness and lack of organization.

A party for Skokov?

There is reason to believe, however, that the post Skokov got in the Federation was not accidental. It was a springboard to the Security Council. It was actually then that the idea of the Security Council's functions and of Skokov's personal role in it was taking shape. The amorphous Council for the Affairs of the Federation – a one-man body, as a matter of fact – was active making contacts with regions and showed keen interest in Russia's valuable resources: gold, diamonds, radioactive materials, nonferrous metals...

On the putsch days, all the defenders of the Russian White House noted the wide-open door of Skokov's empty office. In August that caused many eyebrows to rise, but later all came to the conclusion that he must have been away in Sverdlovsk, with Lobov, where a bunker for a government in exile was being built, just in case.

In the autumn of 1991, after the State Council had been abolished, but the State Councillors remained, Yuri Skokov reached the "home stretch" – the President commissioned him to take care of the committee to work out the status and work procedure for the Security Council. Again everything went imperceptibly, with all the gazes fixed on Yegor Gaidar and his team. While the "boys" were shouting about price liberalization, Yuri Skokov called together a coordination conference of directors, with Vladimir Ispravnikov and Mikhail Malei attending.

Vladimir Ispravnikov is a Khasbulatov man and a strong opponent of the Gaidar government. Mikhail Malei is as strong an opponent of liberal economic policy. Both feel wronged. A few days later, Skokov circulated telegrams demanding that local economic security conferences be called, at an executive and grassroots level.

What was that – a model of the State Emergency Situation Committee on a local scale? An embryo of an opposition directorate party?

The circular specified, in particular, that the resolutions of the coordination conference be formalized by the President's de-

crees and also by the resolultions and laws adopted by the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation. Why is Skokov so sure that Parliament will be obedient to him and his economic security conference? The answer may lie in that there are many "our men" in Parliament, and that the Supreme Economic Council is headed by Vladimir Ispravnikov, a good friend of Skokov's... Incidentally, Ispravnikov is now busy organizing a new political party, named Consolidation. Is that a Skokov party?

It is about time we mentioned Skokov's economic and political views. According to those who cooperated with him in working out economic reforms in various parliaments and various commissions, Skokov does not believe in a market economy, although he does express his sympathy for reforms.

The free market system of coordinates is absolutely alien and inconvenient to him. He does not understand how economic relationships can be based on personal interest. He is a distinct authoritarian. The only method he uses is to rule by decree. "Do you know any colonel who has listened to a sergeant-major?" a parliamentarian asked.

Although all those I interviewed used military language in describing Skokov, he is not a serviceman, as I found out. Anyway, that was what I heard from his aide whom I happened to get on a government phone and who had pretended he did not know whether his patron was a college man at all...

Skokov is a typical etatist. The statement that the government should be an executive directorate of the state sector of the economy belongs to him.

In this light, the figure of Yuri Skokov looks rather controversial. He is all for preserving the present order of things. On the other hand, he is a key figure in Boris Yeltsin's seemingly reformatory administration. Skokov has managed to have Yeltsin sign a decree making Skokov actually No. 2 man in the leadership of Russia. In the absence of President Yeltsin, Chairman of the Security Council, the latter is headed by its secretary who, incidentally, is authorized "to coordinate the work of executive bodies" in the interests of carrying out the resolutions of the Council. In principle, neither Rutskoi nor Gaidar, nor anyone else can give instructions to him. There is no one but the President above Skokov. Incidentally, as far as I know, the Decree on the Security Council has not passed an expert examination held by the President's legal board.

Many think that Skokov has no deep modern concept of Russia's security, which takes special knowledge and expertise. Skokov's mission, as he sees it, is to use the opportunities offered by the Security Council for carrying out the scheme for **ruling Russia** as he sees it.

Grand master shifts chessmen

The influential Moscow media flatter themselves by the delusion they have compelled Yuri Skokov to appear on television (the *Itogi* programme) for the first time. He granted the interview at the President's own urgent request. Here is what Skokov's insiders told me: "There is no such thing as independent press, and the dependent press is not worth dealing with, Skokov said."

At a first glance this position can look arrogant and whimsical. Even when interviewed by the anchorman of the *Itogi* TV programme, Skokov looked unfriendly and haughty. Russia's modern politicians have no idea of image-building and public relations, of course. Many of our general directors are intrinsically contemptuous of those below them. One can understand and even sympathize with that – but why refuse the interviewer any background information? That was so irrational and simply absurd of Skokov that one could not help suspecting him of being morbidly secretive...

Some say that Skokov is self-conscious and, therefore, shy of speaking in public. Secretiveness is his protective device, because coming out in the open may reveal his insolvency. "He is, indeed, vigorous, purposeful, self-assured, even too much so; he likes to play a superman, but is aware of his limits. I know what these limits are, and Skokov is also aware of them," a colleague of his told me.

Some are favourably disposed towards him: he is no politicker, no intriguer, but a convinced and sensitive person who responds to all the developments quickly and is ready to take risks. What's more, he takes risks for the sake of his cause, not for selfish ends. He is a strong man, they say, but too mediocre to decide the fate of Russia today.

Yuri Skokov, Secretary of the Security Council, and Yuri Petrov, the chief of the President's Secretariat, are the only members of Boris Yeltsin's retinue whom the *Den* mouthpiece of the spiritual opposition has not said a bad word about so far.

The reverse side of the military-administrative mentality (the other being arrogance and disregard for the subordinates) is the deification of superiors. Skokov has a long record of good relationships with the President. He has neither personal charisma nor a strong social base. The undercurrent of his *Itogi* interview was: leave us alone, the President knows better than that.

Yeltsin cannot fail to see that a stake on a controversial figure like Skokov looks more than strange. Many think that the President is cleverly balancing among various poles of the political spectrum, which offers him a room for manoeuvre. Every new combination of political chess pieces creates a new situation, stimulates progress, suggests new solutions. Like a good chess player, he is often unpredictable and cannot account for his moves. Is that political flair? There is no cause for worry, they say, the grand master will make his move yet...

Marina Shakina

SOCIOLOGICAL SURVEY

Prof. Boris Grushin's Vox Populi poll

There are successes, nevertheless

What, in your opinion, are the main successes of Russian foreign policy?

Disarmament	**16%**
Russia's integration into the world community	**13%**
Growth of confidence in Russian politicians	**6%**
Recognition of Russia's authority	**5%**
Reception of foreign economic aid	**5%**
Normalization of relations with CIS member states	**3%**

In assessing the results of the Russian government's foreign policy activity, opinions divided sharply: only half of the respondents said that Russian foreign policy had been successful, and about 41 percent said it had not. The more negatively disposed are activists of political parties (63), especially of communist orientaion (68).

Successes are proclaimed, more often than by others, by representatives of executive powers, activists of political parties of non-communist orientaiton, and publicists.

The Russian government's first concern in its relationships with foreign states is believed to be, according to the overwhelming majority of respondents (82 percent), the normalization of relations with other CIS member states. All the leaders showed rare unanimity on this issue: from 70 percent at the "lower point" (public organizations) to 96 percent at the "highest point" (military command). Relations with the USA are given priority by 26 percent (communist-oriented parties) to 64 percent (legislators) of the respondents, with Germany from 0 percent (military command) to 40 percent (entrepreneurs)

(Public opinion leaders poll. June 1992, 500 respondents)

THIS WEEK

■ Political passions in Georgia sometimes rise to such a pitch that a logical explanation can hardly be found. It may appear that newspapers write not about a land whith an ancient and unique civilization, high and refined culture, and a centuries-old brotherhood between the nationalities inhabiting it, but about "a banana republic" with its "kings and cabbage." Only a week ago there was the feeling that with the publication of a manifesto on reconciliation by the State Council, long-awaited peace would at last come to the Georgian land. But suddenly the situation grew tense in Mingrelia, Western Georgia. In Zugdidi, where talks on the stabilization of the social and political situation were held, a group of former President Zviad Gamsakhurdia's advocates attacked the participants in the talks and kidnapped 12 high officials from the Interior Ministry and the State Council of Georgia. Eduard Shevardnadze spoke on television in connection with the attack. He employed tough language not characteristic of him. For the first time, the armed groups of the ex-president's advocates were labelled "enemies of the people."

"We will not retaliate with evil for evil, but if it becomes necessary to use force, we will not retreat this time," Eduard Shevardnadze said. "I have assumed the responsibility before the people and promise them that I will bring the cause we have started to the end so that Georgia would become a truly democratic country."

■ But misfortunes never come singly. A crack which appeared in the Abkhazian-Georgian relations several years ago began to widen quickly after the Abkhazian parliament had virtually voted for a revision of the former system of relations with Tbilisi, for the consolidation of Abkhazia's sovereignty. Tbilisi reacted to this decision so painfully that armed clashes broke out between Georgian troops and the national guard of Abkhazia. Fuel is being added to the conflict by talk that most Abkhazians are ardent advocates of the former president, while the Georgian high officials kidnapped by Zviadists are held somewhere in Abkhazia. Though the parties stressed the need to search for "a formula of conciliation," everything indicates that "the Ossetian variant" may be repeated in that autonomous republic, with a brief lull followed by an exchange of fire. Almost all members of the Abkhazian parliament have handed in their mandates in protest against Tbilisi's interference in Abkhazian affairs. It is a sinister sign.

■ In these circumstances, the Russian government, under an agreement with the Georgian leadership, sent an airborne regiment to Abkhazia with the aim – as the government statement notes – of strengthening the protection of Russian army units stationed on Georgian territory and ensuring the security and evacuation of 1,762 Russian holiday-makers and the service personnel of two sanatoria in Sukhumi. Despite such an exhaustive explanation, the advocates of Zviad Gamsakhurdia insist that the Russian regiment was sent to back up "Moscow's puppet" Shevardnadze.

■ The Central Soviet Army House was the site for a colourful spectacle when the Council of Atamans of the Union of Cossacks met there. Several hundred people wearing paramilitary uniforms, tall hats, caps, sabres and whips gathered in the hall.

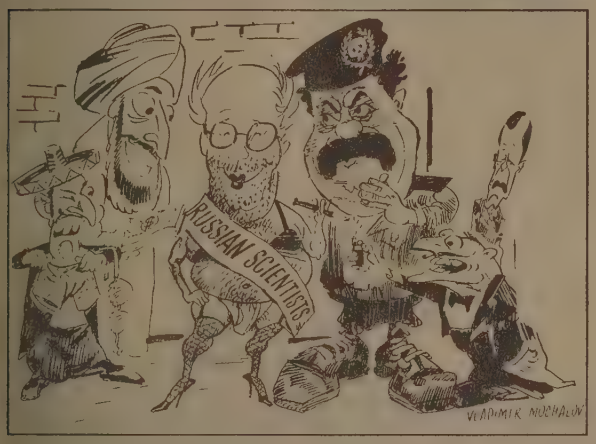
The President's decree on the rehabilitation of the Cossacks,

on their economic and cultural revival in stages has increased the Cossacks' thirst for their distinctive way of life shaped for centuries, and for their development as a social community. At the meeting, some Cossacks called for the free transfer of land to traditional communal ownership, the revival of the historically shaped form of self-government, the management of their husbandry, and a return to the traditions of military service of Cossacks. On the other hand, others pointed out that the privileges formerly enjoyed by the Cossacks could not be restored and that the Cossack way of life could not be imposed on citizens by force. In his address to the Atamans, Vice- President Rutskoi spoke in the same spirit.

Other calls were made, however. Some insisted on "the revival of Cossack troops," independent of the army. "If we have armed regiments, we can present an ultimatum to the government," one delegate said. "I could hire and arm a hundred Cossacks if I had money in my purse," said another.

■ The armed conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan has again become sharply aggravated. Continuing their offensive on nearly all sectors of the front, Azerbaijanian troops have captured 42 sq. km of the territory to which Armenia lays claim, including the village of Artsvashen (Bashkent in Azerbaijanian). This gave cause for Armenian President Levon Petrosian to accuse the Azerbaijanians of launching "an undeclared war" against his country and invading its territory. He appealed to the Commonwealth states, which have signed a collective security treaty, for military and political aid to Armenia. But the Commonwealth states have taken a restrained stand. Baku believes that though the captured village is inhabited by Armenians, it is situated in the Chedabek district of Azerbaijan. Besides, the collective security treaty to which

CARTOON OF THE WEEK



Levon Petrosian appealed has not yet been ratified by the parliaments concerned and therefore cannot be a legal ground for military aid to Armenia. Yerevan took a further action by declaring its intention to seek the convocation of a special meeting of the UN Security Council to consider the question of the Azerbaijanian aggression.

■ Armenia's setbacks gave a stimulus to the consolidation of the opposition. The opponents of Levon Petrosian think that he is not energetic enough in defending the independence of the republic. They accuse him of "territorial concessions to Azerbaijan" and failure to repulse the "aggressor." Seven of the eight major opposition parties formed a National Alliance and changed their tactics from parliamentary confrontation to street demonstrations and rallies, demanding a referendum on the question of no-confidence in Petrosian. However, a special session of the parliament called by the President turned down the opposition's demand, though it declared for more radical measures to check the Azeri aggression.

■ The situation in Nagorny Karabakh continues to worsen. Power there has been assumed by a defence council which dismissed the government of the republic. Martial law has been declared for six months and all men aged 18 to 45 have been drafted into "self-defence detachments."

■ After the ceasefire and the disengagement of the belligerents in Moldova (Moldavia), the joint control commission has set a new task before the peacekeeping forces – the mineclearing of the territory on which fighting was conducted. The dangerous work has been started. Anti-tank, anti-troop and trap mines are extracted form the much-suffering land and defused. The field engineers have expertise in this operation. It is much more difficult to extract mines from the souls of people who have become victims of the conflict.

The leaders of the Dniester Republic confirm their adherence to the policy of achieving full and unconditional independence from Kishinev. However, one can feel less and less firmness in their statements. The statement of the republic's leader, Igor Smirnov, about the intention "to cooperate with Moldova effectively and on a broad scale" is hardly a meaningless phrase. Most likely it is an indication that the leadership of the Dniester Republic is working out a new policy of dialogue and compromise. It would probably help to find a status for the left-bank region which would combine the striving of its population for independence with the territorial integrity of Moldova. It remains to be seen how realistic this policy is. In the meantime the Dniester Republic's authorities continue to hold the cargoes intended for Kishinev. The authorities continue to set up independent government bodies and even raise the question of forming their own army. The more far-sighted observers explain this intricate policy of the Dniester Republic by the reluctance of its leadership to put all their eggs in one basket.

■ A ceasefire agreement reached between the opposed political and nationalist groups in Khorog, Tajikistan, seems to have put an end to their armed confrontation. But the conflict has not ended. The parties are sorting out their differences in the parliament building with no less bitterness than their armed groups are clashing in the ravines of Kurgan-Tyuba.

The opposition immediately took the initiative in the debates. During the first day it was able to settle in its favour three of the four points on the agenda. The parliament confirmed the Presidium's decision on the resignation of S. Kendjayev, former chairman of the Presidium. A. Iskandarov, former acting chairman of the Presidium, was elected as a new Speaker. The parliament repealed by a majority of votes the law on the presidential form of government, which it adopted last spring. R. Nabiyev reproached the deputies for the hasty adoption and revocation of state laws. But this did not produce any effect on the parliament. Some deputies noted that during the last three months the head of the republic was unable to effectively use the possibilities offered him by the law. The political situation in Tajikistan continued to grow tenser and could lead the republic into a civil war. At the same time, the relations between Tajikistan and Afghanistan have been aggravated almost to the breaking point.

■ The Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation has annulled the registration of the charter of the Liberal Democratic Party of the Soviet Union. An examination showed that the LDP charter was registered by the former Justice Ministry of the USSR on April 12, 1991, in violation of the law and under falsified documents. The LDP, known mainly thanks to its eccentric leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky, was the second (after the Communist Party) all-Union political party. It calls for the restoration of the Russian empire from the Baltic Sea to the Pacific, protection of the Russian population along with rule by a "firm hand."

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September 3: **restaurant Okean** (504 thousand rubles), **shops Odezhda,** (360 thousand rubles), **Korobeiniki** (205 thousand rubles) and **Rucheyok** (292 thousand rubles) will be for sale by auction.

September 9: **shops Vassilissa** (131 thousand rubles), **Sdelay sam** (150 thousand rubles), **Volga** (415 thousand rubles), will be for sale. Open auctions: **shops Rosinka** (153 thousand rubles) and **Kondo** (200 thousand rubles).

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DOSSIER

DECREE
OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION ON MEASURES TO ASSIST AND RATIONALIZE INSOLVENT (BANKRUPT) STATE ENTERPRISES AND ON SPECIAL PROCEEDINGS APPLICABLE TO THEM

With the object of assisting state enterprises which become insolvent (bankrupt), ensuring effective use of the state property operated by state enterprises and safeguarding the rights and interests of the state, creditors and employees of insolvent enterprises, and pursuant to the Law of the Russian Federation "On Property in the Russian Federation" and "On Enterprises and Entrepreneurial Activities," I hereby decree the following:

1. Those state enterprises, including enterprises in whose authorized capital the share of state property is 50% or more, which are incapable of discharging their obligations to their creditors and the budget shall be declared insolvent (bankrupt) in accordance with the present decree.

With respect to bankrupt state enterprises, special proceedings shall be initiated, including liquidation, reorganization and other measures designed to improve the economic and financial position thereof and ensure effective use of the state property operated thereby, with the said proceedings to be carried out in accordance with the present decree.

2. The following shall constitute due grounds for declaring a state enterprise bankrupt:

failure to meet its oligations to the budget over the course of three months (with the exception of enterprises which have been granted investment tax credit in accordance with established procedures) and failure to fulfil the demands of legal entities and individuals which have claims on its property within three months of the date of execution thereof and existence of liabilities amounting to two times the value of the enterprise's assets.

3. The decision to declare an enterprise bankrupt shall be taken:

– with respect to state enterprises that are federal property – by the State Committee of the Russian Federation for the Management of State Property;

– with respect to state enterprises that are the property of republics within the Russian Federation – by the executive authorities of the republics within the Russian Federation in accordance with procedures established by the respective republics within the Russian Federation;

– with respect to enterprises that are the property of provinces, regions, autonomous regions, autonomous territories, and the cities of Moscow and St.Petersburg – by the respective property management committees.

4. The above-named authorities and committees shall consider the question of declaring a state enterprise bankrupt on the petition of ministries and state committees of the Russian Federation and the republics within the Russian Federation, tax authorities, government financial agencies, banks and creditors (including state agencies and institutions), should it be found impossible to recover the debts through ordinary civil dispute settlement procedures, or on petition of the debtor enterprise itself.

Tax authorities and financial agencies, as well as banks, shall, in accordance with the legislation of the Russian Federation, inform the respective property management committees about facts which constitute due grounds for declaring a state enterprise bankrupt in accordance with Clause 2 of the present decree.

5. The property management commmittee shall, within a week of being notified by the entities and individuals described in the first paragraph of Clause 4, obtain from the enterprise:

– essential information about the enterprise, including information about its organization, legal status and owners;

– a list of all creditors of the enterprise;

– a list of all debtors of the enterprise;

– a balance sheet for the last date of account prior to the raising of the question about the enterprise's bankruptcy;

– other information about the financial position of the debtor enterprise and its property deemed necessary by the property management committee.

The information received by the property management committee shall not be made public until the enterprise is declared bankrupt. Should the enterprise not be declared bankrupt, the property management committee shall return the above documents to the enterprise and shall be responsible for preventing disclosure of the information contained therein.

Should a state enterprise refuse to provide the aforementioned documents, or should it fail to provide them within the specified time limit, the enterprise shall be automatically declared bankrupt.

6. The property management committee considering the matter of declaring a state enterprise bankrupt shall, within a week of the receipt of the documents described in Clause 5 of the present decree, decide whether the question falls within its terms of reference. Should it be ascertained that the question of the bankruptcy of a specific enterprise falls within the frame of reference of another property management committee, the documents obtained in accordance with Clauses 4 and 5 of the present decree shall be forwarded to the latter within three days' time.

Should the property management committee identify additional owners of the debtor enterprise, these shall be notified that the question of declaring the enterprise bankrupt is being considered and shall be allowed to take part in deciding the question of bankruptcy thereof in accordance with established procedures and in the conduct of bankruptcy proceedings. The property management committee shall, jointly with the debtors and creditors of the debtor enterprise, set up a commission of owners' representatives to decide all questions pertaining to bankruptcy, which shall act in accordance

MOSCOW BUSINESS WEEK

DOSSIER

with a statute approved by the government of the Russian Federation.

7. The property management committee, or, should there exist several owners, the commission of owners' representatives, shall, within a month of being notified by the entities and individuals described in the first paragraph of Clause 4, take either of the following decisions:

a) Declare the state enterprise solvent. The enterprise shall also be declared solvent, should it arrive at an amicable settlement with its creditors.

b) Declare the state enterprise bankrupt. The decision to declare an enterprise bankrupt shall be simultaneously a decision to liquidate the enterprise. From the moment this decision is taken, the enterprise shall be considered to be in a state of bankruptcy.

Should the enterprise be declared solvent, all documents provided thereby shall be returned to it within three days' time.

The procedures to be followed by the commission of owners' representatives in taking the decision to declare a state enterprise bankrupt shall be defined by the State Committee of the Russian Federation for the Management of State Property in respect to enterprises which are federal property, or by the councils of ministers of the republics within the Russian Federation in respect to enterprises owned thereby.

An enterprise declared bankrupt shall have the right to appeal the decision in a court of justice. Lodging an appeal shall not result in a suspension of proceedings defined by the present decree.

8. From the moment a decision is taken to declare a state enterprise bankrupt, the enterprise shall be administered by the respective property management committee.

The decision to declare a state enterprise bankrupt shall by all means be published in the press, and shall be communicated to its employees and the corresponding ministry (state committee) of the Russian Federation. In cases defined by the legislation of the Russian Federation, the decision to declare a state enterprise bankrupt shall be communicated to the local Soviets of people's deputies and the State Committee of the Russian Federation on Anti-Monopoly Policy and Support of New Economic Undertakings.

From the moment a state enterprise is declared bankrupt until it is, on a competitive basis, transferred over to an entrepreneur for independent management, or until an administrator is appointed, all decisions with respect to the disposal of its property and dismissal of its employees shall be taken with the concurrence of the property management committee.

9. From the moment a state enterprise is declared bankrupt, the property management committee, or the commission of owners' representatives, should there be several owners, shall ensure the safety of the assets of the enterprise, its continued functioning, and protection of the rights and interests of its employees in accordance with the legislation of the Russian Federation, and shall also be responsible for the conduct of proceedings provided for in the present decree with the aim of improving the financial position thereof, repaying its debts and restoring its solvency, provided that the present decree does not stipulate otherwise.

10. Within a month after a decision is taken to declare a state enterprise bankrupt, the property management committee, or the commission of owners' representatives, should there be several owners, shall, in consultation with experts, representatives of the appropriate ministry, creditors and employees, consider possible alternatives of reorganization and financial and economic rehabilitation enabling the enterprise to emerge from bankruptcy and prevent its liquidation.

After the expiry of one month, the property management committee, or the commission of owners' representatives, should there be several owners, shall approve a programme of rationalizing the bankrupt enterprise. Should the bankrupt enterprise, in accordance with established procedures, be stripped of a licence to carry forward its principal activity, and should it be found impossible to restore its solvency within the time limit prescribed by the present decree, the rationalization programme shall not be undertaken, and such proceedings shall be taken with respect to the enterprise as defined by Clause 22 of the present decree.

11. The rationalization programme of the bankrupt enterprise shall provide for the enterprise, on a competitive basis, to be transferred over to entrepreneurs (domestic or foreign legal entities or individuals) for independent management for a term of between 6 and 18 months.

Should it prove impossible to identify the winner of the tender, or should no one apply to take part therein, or should the independent entrepreneur fail to achieve the specified results by the end of the rationalization period, an administrator shall be appointed on a contractual basis with the object of direct management of the enterprise for a term of between 3 and 12 months (up to 18 months for agricultural enterprises).

The rationalization programme shall ensure that not more than 30% of the enterprise's workforce will be dismissed.

12. Should the decision be taken to rationalize the enterprise in accordance with Clause 10 of the present decree, the property management committee shall, within three weeks, announce and organize a tender for the right to independently manage the bankrupt enterprise.

The terms of the tender shall provide the following:

– undertaking to retain at least 70% of the enterprise's workforce;

– guarantees of social protection of the employees of the enterprise in accordance with the legislation of the Russian Federation, including guarantees to safeguard the rights and interests of employees who are laid off as a result of rationalization, or, should the rationalization fail to restore the solvency of the enterprise;

– undertaking to extinguish the debts of the enterprise;

– guarantees of environmental protection during and after rationalization;

– the time limit for which the enterprise is transferred for independent management.

Tenderers may not be required to meet any other requirements.

The decision to hold a tender and its terms, as well as information about the balance-sheet value of the enterprise and its debts, shall be published in the press and other mass media not later than three weeks prior to the tender.

13. To take part in the tender, entrepreneurs (domestic or foreign legal entities or individuals) shall submit an application and present documents evidencing their creditworthiness to the property management committee, undertake to fulfil all terms of the tender in the event they are designated as winners, and deposit security in the form of moneys or securities worth at least 10% of the balance-sheet value of the enterprise's assets. The employees of the enterprise shall have the right to take part in the tender on general terms.

The tender for the right to independently manage a bankrupt enterprise which is federal property shall be held by a tender commission which shall be set up by the State Committee of the Russian Federation for the Management of State Property jointly with the appropriate ministry and representatives of employees within a week after the decision to hold the tender is taken.

Tenders for the right to independently manage bankrupt enterprises which are owned by the republics within the Russian Federation, provinces, regions, autonomous

MOSCOW BUSINESS WEEK

DOSSIER

regions, autonomous territories, and the cities of Moscow and St. Petersburg shall be held by tender commissions set up by the corresponding property management committees jointly with the appropriate ministries and representatives of employees within the same time period.

14. The tender shall be considered to be won by that entrepreneur who has pledged the largest sum as security for the enterprise's liabilities and successful conduct of rationalization.

From the moment the winner of the tender is announced, the winner shall assume all rights to manage the enterprise during the time period specified by the terms of the tender, including the rights to:

– restructure and re-focus production capacity, should the rationalization programme not stipulate otherwise;

– appoint and dismiss employees, including the executive staff of the enterprise, provided the workforce is not reduced by more than 30%;

– dispose of the assets of the enterprise, with the exception of leasing them out, and including the sale or mortgage of fixed assets (excluding buildings and facilities) and current assets, should the sale or mortgage thercof not be expressly banned by the legislation of the Russian Federation. At least 80 % of the proceeds from the sale or mortgage of fixed or current assets shall be used for the purposes of financial rationalization and the extinguishing of the enterprise's debts;

– take the decision to break up the bankrupt enterprise or transform it into an open joint-stock company, following approval by the property management committee, or the commission of owners' representatives, should there be several owners;

– directly manage production.

Government bodies may not interfere with the entrepreneurs's day-to-day activities related to managing the enterprise.

The state shall not bear responsibility for those obligations of the enterprise which arise after it is transferred to the entrepreneur.

15. Should only one application be filed by the date of the tender, the tender shall not be held and the enterprise shall be transferred for management to the entrepreneur or employees who submitted the application.

16. Should no applications be filed by the date of the tender, the property management committee, or the commission of owners' representatives, should there be several owners, shall take the decision to appoint an administrator, or take a decision in accordance with Clause 22 of the present decree.

Administrators of enterprises that are federal property shall be appointed by the respective ministries. Administrators of enterprises owned by the republics within the Russian Federation, provinces, regions, autonomous regions, autonomous territories, and the cities of Moscow and St. Petersburg shall be appointed by the executive authorities of the respective republics, provinces, regions, autonomous regions, autonomous territories, and the cities of Moscow and St. Petersburg. Administrators shall be appointed within ten days after the decision is taken in favour of direct management of the bankrupt enterprise. An executive of the bankrupt enterprise may not be appointed its administrator.

17. While carrying out rationalization, the administrator shall have the same rights as are provided to the winner of a tender in accordance with the second paragraph of Clause 14 of the present decree. The administrator shall also comply with the terms set out in the second paragraph of Clause 12 of the present decree.

While exercising his duties, the administrator shall be accountable to the agency which appointed him and to the respective property management committee, or commission of owners' representatives, should there be several owners, and shall report to them on the implementation of the rationalization programme at least once a month.

The amount of remuneration payable to administrators shall be set in the contract. A contract with an administrator may be cancelled:

– at his own request;

– if he violates the law or terms of the contract;

– if circumstances outside his control make it impossible for him to continue to execute the contract;

– if the administrator presents information evidencing the impossibility of further rationalizing the bankrupt enterprise or the impossibility of achieving the objectives of the rationalization programme.

Should the contract with an administrator be cancelled prior to its termination, the property management committee, or the commission of owners' representatives, should there be several owners, shall either decide to appoint a new administrator for the remaining term or to cut short the rationalization programme and liquidate the enterprise in accordance with Clause 22 of the present decree.

The new administrator shall be appointed in accordance with procedures defined in Clause 16 of the present decree.

18. The entrepreneur or the administrator shall, within a week of the end of the rationalization period, report to the property management committee, or the commission of owners' representatives, should there be several owners, about the financial and economic position of the bankrupt enterprise.

Should it be ascertained that rationalization has failed to rehabilitate the enterprise, and the situation described in Clause 2 of the present decree has not been remedied, Clause 22 of the present decree shall be applied. From this moment, the enterprise shall revert to the authority of the property management committee. The contract with the administrator shall be rescinded, or, if the enterprise was transferred to an entrepreneur for independent management, the security pledged thereby (if any) shall not be restituted thereunto, but shall be used to extinguish the debts of the enterprise.

19. Should the rationalization programme succeed in eliminating the circumstances which constituted due grounds for declaring the state enterprise bankrupt, the property management committee, or the commission of owners' representatives, should there be several owners, shall take the decision to terminate the state of bankruptcy.

20. The entrepreneur (employees) who has (have) successfully carried out the rationalization of a bankrupt enterprise shall become the owner(s) of the enterprise. His (their) share in the assets of the enterprise shall be constituted by the funds invested in the enterprise in the course of rationalization and the income of the enterprise on the date when the decision is taken to terminate the state of bankruptcy, less the undischarged liabilities of the enterprise. The security (if any) shall be restituted to the entrepreneur (employees) who may use it to increase his (their) share of the enterprise's property.

21. The administrator who has successfully carried out the rationalization of a bankrupt enterprise shall be entitled to a lump-sum remuneration payable by the enterprise and amounting to 20 monthly salaries, as set in the original contract, and shall be appointed chief executive officer of the enterprise, provided he gives his consent thereto.

22. The property management committee, or the commission of owners' representatives, should there be several owners, shall take the decision to liquidate the bankrupt enterprise and subsequently remove its name from the state register in the following cases:

– if it is found impossible to rationalize the enterprise in accordance with Clause 10 of the present decree;

– if it is found impossible to rationalize the enterprise in accordance with Clause 16 of the present decree;

– if the rationalization programme is cut short prior to its termination in accordance with Clause 17 of the present decree;

– if the objectives of rationalization are not attained;

– if the enterprise is once again declared

MOSCOW BUSINESS WEEK

DOSSIER

bankrupt within a year after rationalization.

The decision to liquidate enterprises that are federal property shall be taken by the State Committee of the Russian Federation for the Management of State Property.

The decision to liquidate enterprises that are the property of the republics within the Russian Federation, provinces, regions, autonomous regions, autonomous territories, and the cities of Moscow and St. Petersburg shall be taken by the respective property management committees.

23. After a decision to liquidate the enterprise is taken and approval is received (if necessary), the property management committee, or the commission of owners' representatives, should there be several owners, shall, within one week:

– communicate the decision to the employees;

– appoint a liquidation commission with representation of employees and define procedures of its operation;

– give public notice of the decision in the mass media and notify the creditors that they are to present their claims within two months' time;

– announce that the enterprise and assets are to be sold off on a competitive basis and make public the terms thereof.

From this moment, the enterprise and its assets shall be administered by the liquidation commission, which shall undertake such steps as provided for by the legislation of the Russian Federation with the object of safeguarding the assets of the enterprise, ensuring the social protection of its employees, and identifying the creditors and debtors of the enterprise, and shall also make preparations for the selling off of the enterprise and its assets on a commercial basis.

24. The tender to sell off the enterprise and its assets shall be held after the deadline set for creditors to present their claims, but not later than three months from the date when the decision was taken to liquidate the enterprise.

The terms of the tender shall include:

– acquisition of the entire enterprise;

– assumption of the obligations of the enterprise;

– assumption of obligations to ensure social guarantees for and safeguard the rights and interests of the employees of the enterprise in accordance with the legislation of the Russian Federation.

The terms of the tender may also include:

– assumption of an obligation to retain the enterprise's principal specialization;

– retaining of no less than 70% of the enterprise's workforce.

Should the enterprise not be acquired on the original terms of the tender, the fixed and current assets and other property thereof shall be sold off piecemeal.

Tenders to sell off bankrupt enterprises that are federal property shall be held by the State Committee of the Russian Federation for the Management of State Property with the participation of the employees of these enterprises.

Tenders to sell off bankrupt enterprises that are the property of the republics within the Russian Federation, provinces, regions, autonomous regions, autonomous territories, and the cities of Moscow and St. Petersburg shall be held by tender commissions, which shall be set up by the respective local administrations with the participation of the employees of these enterprises.

25. The right to take part in tenders organized to sell off enterprises and their assets shall be granted to both domestic and foreign legal entities and individuals, provided that clauses stipulating otherwise have not been included in the terms of the tenders with the approval of the State Committee of the Russian Federation for the Management of State Property. Creditors and the employees of the enterprises shall have the right to take part in the tenders on general terms.

Tenderers shall deposit security amounting to 50% of the initial price of the assets.

The tender shall be considered to be won by the tenderer who has bid the highest price for the enterprise being sold and who has undertaken to comply with the terms of the tender.

Should there be only one application to take part in a tender, the enterprise shall be sold to this applicant for the initial price.

Should it prove impossible to sell the enterprise at the initial price, the latter may be lowered by a maximum of 30%. Should it again prove impossible to sell the enterprise, the decision shall be taken to sell the assets of the enterprise piecemeal.

The procedure for holding the tenders and setting the initial prices of the enterprises put up for sale shall be in conformity with the Rules of Conduct of Commercial Tenders to Sell Bankrupt Enterprises and Their Property. The procedure for using the proceeds from the sale of bankrupt enterprises and their assets shall be defined by the government of the Russian Federation in accordance with the legislation of the Russian Federation.

The proceeds from the sale of enterprises shall, in accordance with the legislation of the Russian Federation, be used to discharge the enterprises' liabilities to the budget, satisfy the claims of creditors, make payments to the employees being dismissed, and make other compulsory payments, as well as defray the expenses incurred in the rationalization and sale of the enterprises, including expenditures on the liquidation commission.

Should the assets of an enterprise be sold piecemeal, each employee to be dismissed shall be entitled to at least three months' pay. Should the proceeds from the sale of the assets of the enterprise be insufficient to make these payments, the severance pay shall be paid out of the respective budget.

26. The unsold portion of the assets of an enterprise shall be handed over to the successor thereto, which shall be identified by the liquidation commission and shall be held responsible to discharge such obligations as set out in the legislation of the Russian Federation, to the extent of the value of the assets.

The responsibility to discharge the enterprise's obligations with respect to reimbursement of damages and other similar obligations shall be assumed by bodies of state administration.

27. The liquidation commission shall, within three weeks of the sale of the enterprise or its assets, inform government registration agencies of this fact, so that they may remove its name from the state register.

28. The government of the Russian Federation shall, within two weeks' time, adopt such decisions as are necessary for carrying out bankruptcy proceedings with respect to state enterprises in accordance with the present decree.

The Ministry of Finance of the Russian Federation shall, within a week's time, present for approval to the government of the Russian Federation its recommendations with respect to procedures of safekeeping and utilization of funds deposited as security in accordance with the present decree, and with respect to procedures for the use of proceeds from the sale of bankrupt enterprises and their assets.

The State Committee of the Russian Federation for the Management of State Property shall, jointly with the Legal Department of the President of the Russian Federation, draw up the "Rules of Conduct of Tenders for Transferring Bankrupt Enterprises to Independent Managers" and "Rules of Conduct of Commercial Tenders to Sell Bankrupt Enterprises and Their Property," and approve them within a week's time.

29. The government of the Russian Federation is hereby empowered, following an analysis of the execution of the present decree, to alter the ratio of the sum of liabilities of an enterprise to the value of its assets, which is set out in Clause 2 of the present decree as a criterion of declaring the enterprise bankrupt.

30. The present decree shall go into force on the date of its publication, and shall remain in force until the enactment of the Law of the Russian Federation "On Bankruptcy."

President of the Russian Federation
B. YELTSIN
Moscow, Kremlin,
June 14, 1992

MOSCOW BUSINESS WEEK

New neighbours, new problems

Russia's geopolitical position is undergoing profound change

What are the new parameters of sovereign Russia? One can form a judgement from the following data: it holds first place in area (about 17.1 million sq. km.), sixth in population (148.1 million), and fifth in the volume of gross domestic product (after the United States, China, Japan and Germany). Russia's geopolitical position in the present-day world radically differs from the one it occupied as part of the USSR. It has not yet settled completely, being in the process of formation, which brings with it a host of complex domestic and external problems for Russia. It is impossible currently to size up all the changes to a full extent. However, the outlines of a new political, economic and geographic position of the Russian Federation are becoming increasingly apparent.

This concerns neighbours and frontiers first of all. As before, Russia borders on 16 countries – more than any other state in the world. Two neighbours – the United States and Japan – are separated from it by water, by the ocean and sea respectively. Formally, on a map, the total length of borders remains the same – about 58,600 km. However, in fact, they are quite different today. Two years ago Russia bordered on eight foreign countries, the United States and Japan included. The other borders were internal, within the Soviet Union, and had a formal character. Few people, except perhaps geographers, paid attention to their length and such data appeared mainly in reference books. Today the data has acquired a real, practical meaning. The internal borders between the constituent republics of the Soviet Union have become borders with foreign states. At present, even within the Commonwealth of Independent States, they separate rather than unite, and, whether we like it or not, their length now has to be counted too.

New frontiers, new problems

On land, the Russian Federation borders on eight former constituent republics of the USSR. The total length of this frontier is 11,068 km – with Estonia (437), Latvia (250), Lithuania (303, including the Kaliningrad region), Belarus (990), Ukraine (1,270), Georgia (250), Azerbaijan (367) and Kazakhstan (7,200). The border between Russia and Kazakhstan is the world's longest land border between two states. In Siberia and the Far East, Russia still has long borders with Mongolia and China and a short border (only 16.5 km) with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. In the northwest, it borders on Norway and Finland, and in the west, in the Kaliningrad region, with Poland (244 km).

Russia is faced with an uphill task. First, it has been declared officially that Moscow has to organize the defence of the state frontier with "new neighbours," mainly with the Baltic states and Azerbaijan. The building of the frontier itself, the establishment of customs services and other facilities urgently require huge sums of money. Secondly, Moscow has to establish a new, peculiar regime of borders ("transparent" and "penetrable") with other former Union republics. By all indications, Russian diplomats will have to settle by negotiations – and this is not an easy job – a whole spate of territorial claims to Russia. In recent time these claims have been made at an official and unofficial level (in the mass media, policy statements of some public organizations, etc.). Japan lays claim to the southern islands of the Kuril range, Estonia and Latvia to some border areas of the Leningrad and Pskov regions, Finland to part of Karelia proper, the Karelian isthmus, etc.

Keys to the problems

It is no secret to anyone that Russia's political, economic and geographic position has greatly deteriorated in the last one and a half year. At the same time Russia has untapped potential for the solution of complex problems, geopolitical included. The use of these opportunities could alleviate the crisis situation in the country.

The Kaliningrad region is currently separated from the Russian Federation by hundreds of kilometres of the territory of the Baltic states and Belarus. Transport communication with it becomes costlier and is complicated, in particular by the railway and customs authorities of Lithuania. Many difficulties are arising because of the rupture of former inner-Union economic ties, in particular in the Baltic economic region of which the Kaliningrad region was a part. The region was supplied with electricity through Lithuania, mainly from the unified power system of the European part of the USSR, and received oil products from the Mazeikiai oil refinery in Lithuania to which an oil pipeline from Russia had been laid. With its border remaining almost open, the region incurs serious losses due to large-scale contraband on the part of Lithuania, which is assuming the scale of real economic aggression. Many difficulties have also arisen in connection with the mass flow of tourists from Poland and Germany through the now practically open border with Poland.

The westernmost region

Meanwhile, the Kaliningrad region is becoming increasingly important for the Russian Federation. It has the westernmost port of Russia, one of its three ports in the Baltic Sea, in addition to St. Petersburg and Vyborg. Moreover, it is the only port which remains open for navigation all year round. Baltiysk is the chief base of the Baltic Fleet.

The region represents an enclave separated from the main territory of the state. This inconvenience of its political and geographic position is compensated to a considerable extent by its economic situation. The region lies almost in the centre of many important trade routes in the east of Europe, at a distance of 650 to 700 km from Russia and less than 600 km from Berlin, Stockholm, Copenhagen and Minsk. Some Hanseatic traditions have remained in the Baltics. Many-sided ties have been established in the postwar years, including ties between the member states of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance as well as ties between the Baltic economic region of the USSR and cities and ports in the north of Poland and in the former German Democratic Republic. The railway going from Kaliningrad westwards has the same gauge as the railways of Poland and Germany. By the end of the year foreign building companies expect to finish

the construction of a modern highway from Kaliningrad to Berlin.

The Kaliningrad region has a relatively developed diversified economy capable of producing much for Russia and the region itself despite its small size. For instance, the region accounted for 10 percent of the entire seafood catch in the USSR. For Russia this indicator is even higher. It has enterprises in machine building, especially transport and road building, in electrical engineering, the pulp and paper and light industries, dairy and meat livestock breeding, and such a rare endeavor as amber production on the sea coast. The Kaliningrad region has considerable intellectual potential (a university, several academic and branch research institutes, etc.).

The region has favourable conditions for setting up a free economic zone, one of the 11 to be created in Russia. The recently opened Kaliningrad commodity and stock exchange can play an important part in this respect. It seems that Russia should give every possible assistance to its westernmost region, "window" into Europe, the only region directly bordering on Poland, one of the former members of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance in Eastern Europe. The region also lies near to Germany with which Russia has broad foreign trade ties.

Will Russia be let into the European home?

The Baltic states, Belarus and Ukraine sort of fence Russia off from the other European countries. It can be said they have "pushed" Russia deeper into Eurasia. But Russia is connected with East European countries, former members of the CMEA, by oil, gas and ethylene pipelines and power transmission of the Mir system. Some of them reach West European countries and even Italy. It is also connected with Eastern Europe by major railways, the Moscow-Paris railway included, and with the East – by the Moscow-Beijing railway. The present situation engenders for Russia, and for some other countries, a host of new complex problems, including those on international level, connected with the solution of political, transport, economic, technical, personnel and financial problems (for instance, the cost of oil and gas transit through the territory of Ukraine and Belarus).

The geographic "remoteness" of Russia from Western Europe, compared with its previous position in the USSR, has noticeably reduced its role in the political and economic affairs of Europe. The former international bodies (the CMEA and the Warsaw Treaty) no longer exist. The Russian Federation has not yet joined the existing bodies. It can be said that the Baltic states, Ukraine and Belarus have approached Europe closer than Russia. However, in the postwar decades immense material values have been created mainly in Eastern and partly in Central Europe by the efforts of CMEA member countries and with great participation by Russia as part of the USSR. These material values consist of thousands of industrial and other sites: mills and factories, electric power plants, mines, roads, canals, ports, and so on. It can be supposed that intensified foreign policy and foreign economic business ties with East European countries, at least on a bilateral basis, would prove beneficial to Russia in such hard times.

Facing the East

Russia's direct ties with the former Union republics of Central Asia have been cut by the vast territory of Kazakhstan, and Georgia and Azerbaijan separate it from Armenia. This complicates for Russia and Armenia the fulfilment of some of their mutual commitments within the Commonwealth. The newly formed states have also separated Russia from its neighbours of the second echelon, so to speak – India and Pakistan and the Middle Eastern states. In addition, in that vast region on the whole as well as in its separate parts, especially in Central Asia and Transcaucasia, the social, political and economic situation has changed radically. Russia, its diplomatic and other governmental services, have to learn the painful lessons of a different policy – first of all national, confessional, social, economic, moral and ethical – and carefully take into account the national psychology and outlook of new leaders in a number of countries.

At the same time Russia is now faced there with an entirely new evident fact – the intense competition for influence in the Central Asian and Transcaucasian republics by several directly or indirectly neighbouring Moslem countries, such as Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. Afghanistan, where Moslem forces have come to power, is also increasingly drawn into this competition.

On its eastern frontiers, in Siberia and the Far East, Russia has to tackle problems mainly inherited from the Soviet Union and, in a number of cases, tasks merely proclaimed by the former leadership of the country. For instance, Russia and Mongolia, which have a common border of 3,005 km, began to transform broad economic and other ties developed over the last 70 years. The new ties will be based on the principle of bilateral mutual advantage. Mongolia has lost most favoured nation treatment and various privileges granted it, as well as Vietnam and Cuba, by member countries of the former CMEA. The possibilities of expanding cooperation between

Russia and Mongolia are far from exhausted. In particular, cooperation would be beneficial in a number of branches of the economy in Eastern Siberia (the Buryat republic and the Irkutsk and Chita regions) and in Western Siberia (the Kuznetsk basin and Altai) with which Mongolia has maintained business ties for a long time.

After the normalization of Soviet-Chinese interstate relations, which began in the mid-1980s, military tension on the land frontier of the two countries (then 7,518 km) was removed. Since then economic ties between China and our country, especially between Dongbei, one of China's most developed regions, and the Russian Far East, have increased greatly. These ties, including considerable border trade, could be expanded much further in view of the fact that the natural resources and economic structures of both regions mutually supplement each other. It seems, however, that the Far East is not prepared for such an expansion as things currently stand.

Less access to the seas

One of the most serious consequences of the new geopolitical situation for Russia is no doubt the drastically cut access to the seas, to the world ocean which Russia hasn't known for centuries. Today the multifarious role of this factor in the present-day world is great and continues to increase. The conditions for Russia's use of major ports in the Black, Azov, Baltic and Caspian seas as well as on the Danube have changed, and it appears they will be made tougher. The ports of Odessa, Ilyichevsk, Nikolayev, Kherson, Yalta, Batumi, Poti, Mariupol, Kerch, Klaipeda, Riga, Liepaja, Ventspils, Tallinn, Baku and Izmail have been built and expanded by the efforts and means of the whole of the Soviet Union, with Russia making the decisive contribution.

Over the last few decades huge investments – incomparable with those of the Baltic republics – have been made in the construction of the Novo-Tallinn merchant port (worth 2.4 billion dollars), the first-class large oil-tank port in Ventspils (to which an oil pipeline had been laid from Russia), modern port terminals in Klaipeda, Liepaja and Riga, and, finally, the Klaipeda-Mukran ferry between the former USSR and German Democratic Republic.

Besides the Kaliningrad port, only two ports have remained for Russia in the Baltic Sea – the St. Petersburg (Leningrad) port in the Gulf of Finland, which has never had enough means, for an overhaul as well, and a small port at Vyborg. With the exception of the Novorossiysk port (the first in volume of freight turnover, including oil loading, in the former USSR), Murmansk and Nakhodka, the other ports of vast Russia – Arkhangelsk, Vladivostok, Vanino, Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, ports in the south of Sakhalin, Astrakhan, Makhachkala, Sochi and Tuapse – cannot be even compared with those which it took care of and used first of all. Most of these ports have much more difficult natural conditions and technical barriers to exploitation (they are often ice-bound for several months in winter). They are equipped considerably worse and have a lesser freight turnover. Moreover, they have a less convenient transport and geographic position. Many routes become longer involving all the unfavourable consequences: a greater expenditure of fuel, a longer travelling time, etc. For instance, the distance to Rotterdam from St. Petersburg is 1,098 km, from Ventspils 759 km and from Riga 868 km. The distance to London from St. Petersburg is 1,182 km, from Ventspils and Riga 880 and 989 km respectively. The distance from Odessa (Ilyichevsk port) to Marseilles is 1,720 km, and from Novorossiysk 1,834 km.

In the northwest and the south Russia has practically no littoral areas suitable for the construction of new ports without huge expenditure. Therefore, it has to take care of the existing ports. In these circumstances the question of using internal sea ports more effectively becomes urgent. Perhaps the time has come to revive the importance of Astrakhan as a long-time centre which connected Russia through its main artery, the Volga River, with the East, first of all Iran. I think Taganrog, Russia's only port on the Sea of Azov, could also play a bigger part. Russia has seas in the Pacific and Arctic oceans, and the Northern sea route. However, in the near future it will be unable to use them more actively because of the expenses involved. At present it is simply not ready to use them.

As a result of the breakup of the USSR Russia has retained 8 of the 17 steamship companies, roughly half the tonnage of the merchant fleet and, moreover, not the best in quality. A considerable part of modern ships has remained in the former Latvian, Estonian and Lithuanian steamship companies (with a total tonnage of more than two million) and in the Black Sea company (over five million tons). Russia has been cut off the Danube, the former Soviet Danube steamship company with its centre in Izmail. The steamship company has gone to Ukraine. The Danube Fleet, built in the postwar years with a great participation of Russia, is the largest on that international artery (until recently Yugoslav was the second in size). It consists of hundreds of vessels (total tonnage over one million) of various types, including specialized container carriers, ships of the "river-sea" type, and so on. With the loss of the Danube Fleet Russia's trade, transport, passenger, tourist and other ties with the Danube countries have been cut.

Russia's sea-fishing industry, its fishing fleet and ports, is also in a very difficult situation. About 400 modern fishing vessels of the former Soviet fleet with predominantly Slav (90 percent) crews have been "privatized" by Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia on the grounds that at the time they proclamed sovereignty the vessels were registered at the ports of the Baltic states. Even worse is the situation of the Baltic and Black Sea Navies which can lose almost all of their present bases.

The very character of Russia's current transition period makes it extremely difficult to forecast the development of the federation and predict what geopolitical position it will occupy entering the third millennium. The outcome depends on so many heterogeneous factors that it would be imprudent to draw any conclusions.

Nevertheless, one can already discern general tendencies of Russia's development in the geopolitical context.

The traditional cultural, trade, economic and other ties which have taken shape over the centuries, the territorial proximity of the republics and their closely interlinked economies are favourable factors for the appearance of a zone of peace, good-neighbourliness and stability on the territory of the former USSR.

The political situation in Russia may be aggravated by an upsurge in national, religious and ethnic conflicts within the federation and outside it, the strengthening of the positions of nationalist and religious forces in the government and public organizations of neighbouring states, and the growing influence in them of forces which have long been unfriendly to Russia. It is difficult to say what tendency will prevail. But one thing is clear: the destiny of Russia, the Commonwealth of Independent States and, to a considerable extent, the situation in the world will depend in the final analysis on how these tendencies develop.

Sergei Rakovsky,
Doctor of Geography

The camel comes to Russia

The camel which symbolizes one of the world's most-smoked cigarette brands has finally arrived in St.Petersburg. The new company R.J.R.-Retro has been set up by R.J. Reynolds Tobacco International, the world's third-largest cigarette producer and America's fastest growing cigarette exporter, along with the Russian partnership AS-Petro, the first privatized tobacco factory in Russia.

The two signed a fairly unusual contract. Reynolds will supply six modern filter-tipped cigarette production and packaging lines, enabling AS-Petro to more than double its output. The move will make R.J.R.-Petro one of the largest cigarette makers in Russia. Reynolds has also pledged to provide comprehensive assistance to meet international standards in technology, management, information processing and distribution. All this will be accomplished through the implementation of a comprehensive programme for training the employees of the joint venture.

The move by Reynolds represents the first major investment by a foreign company in a privately-owned cigarette producer in Russia.

The new partnership, in addition to improving the quality and increasing the output of local brands (Peter the Great, St. Petersburg, Kosmos, etc.), will produce and sell for rubles such brands as Camel, Winston and Salem.

Reynolds announced its sponsorship of a management training programme in St.Petersburg. Recently, a check for $100 million has been handed over to city mayor Anatoly Sobchak. The money will enable St. Petersburg's higher administration school to purchase up-to-date equipment to modernize its facilities.

It was also announced that the company would finance a long-term, St.Petersburg-based programme to train managers in the administrative skills necessary in a market economy. The programme will be monitored by experts from the US business school Fukva, which has done more than any other US organization to train the managers of Russian state-run and private enterprises.

There are unofficial reports that a portion of Reynolds' profit will be used to expand St. Petersburg's seaport.

Arabs invite Russian specialists

Persian Gulf countries are known to be one of the world's largest labour markets. Now they are especially interested in Russian personnel.

The recruitment of foreigners in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Oman is carried out by private firms. The Russian delegation has recently toured the region and various proposals made have been met with considerable interest. The Persian Gulf countries are closely following the progress of economic reform in Russia and are prepared to give jobs to Russian specialists, especially highly skilled ones, including former defence industry personnel. There is a demand for nearly all professions. Excellent prospects exist for engineers and technicians, sailors, oil-drillers, concrete-layers, joiners, truck drivers, sport coaches, nurses and medical attendants.

Immigrant workers enjoy a very high degree of social protection. For instance, the labour code of the United Arab Emirates is on the UN list of the world's ten most advanced national labour legislations. The labour code of Oman has provisions for financial compensation for on-the-job injuries and occupational diseases. These countries have drawn up their labour legislations on the basis of various conventions and recommendations of the International Labour Organization.

Job-seekers should know English if they hope to land a job. A good knowledge of English is an absolute must for doctors and nurses, while some blue-collar workers have to meet certain minimum requirements.

Approximate monthly wages in agriculture are $410, in the oil industry – $1,061, in gas and water supply networks – $472, and in construction – $387. Workers are, as a rule, provided with free board and lodging.

As for employment contracts, Arab agencies prefer to do business directly with similar agencies in other countries. Therefore, the role of Russia's Labour Ministry will be confined to licensing future Russian employment agencies.

University joint venture

A St.Petersburg Russian-American University has been set up in the city on the Neva. Among its stockholders are Baylor University, one of the oldest in Texas, and the North-Western Polytechnic Institute, which serves as the site of the university, as well as other Russian and American nationals. The university offers a management programme, information systems and a programme of study in the USA.

Tel.: (812) 273–43–02

Aurora Borealis to produce oil

The joint venture Aurora Borealis, set up by the American company CONOCO and the Arkhangelsk-geology association last year, has announced it was starting the joint exploitation of an oil desposit. It is the first such venture of joint oil production in Russia.

Most Western investors and potential partners do not yet want to take risks by investing money on the vast expanses of Northern Russia. There are exceptions, however. CONOCO, which belongs to the powerful du Pont corporation, is the first American company to become a partner of a Russian enterprise. Its example can be followed by other respectable Western companies which want to operate with long-term prospects.

Aurora Borealis is ready to invest three billion dollars in the exploitation of three oil-bearing basins – Dosyushevsky, Ardalinsky and Kolvinsky – which lie to the west of the Urals near the polar circle. The joint venture will develop the territory where commercial oil production has never before been undertaken. This means that it plans to create an infrastructure for the fields – to build roads, bridges, pipelines and houses at its own expense.

The expected profit from oil production will be divided equally between the Soviet and American partners, not counting deductions to the republican and local budgets, taxes, etc.

The construction of the first, 57 km-long, pipeline will begin next winter, and oil production is to be started at the end of 1994.

How to evaluate moral damage

Defamation of character: compensation, a tricky business

It is depressing to talk about the way our press is treated by the Supreme Soviet (parliament) of Russia. The parliament's decision on the newspaper *Izvestia* shows that its members do not observe the laws they themselves have adopted.

The reckless actions of Speaker Khasbulatov and his associates impelled the government and the President to demonstrate their adherence to democracy and give assurances that they will stand up for the independent press. However, the government has the pleasant burden of distributing subsidies for newsprint (a ton of which cost 700 rubles in July last year, 7,000 rubles in February this year, and 29,000 rubles now), for postal services (with the distribution tariffs rising fast), and for publishing expenses. In addition, the former official newspapers have been given a free hand not merely with a clear conscience, but also with empty pockets. For instance, *Izvestia* does not still own a single writing desk, though its opponents claim that it has become "a private newspaper owned by its editorial staff."

Let's look to judicial power at last. It turns out that courts can also make life unbearable for journalists. True, for some time now our journalists have written whatever they liked with impunity, and hardly anyone will enjoy the prospect of being involved in a court case where a suit has been filed by those whose honour and dignity were injured by a hastily written article. But nothing can be done here. It is certainly a merit of the law on news media that it defends not only journalists, but also readers. What matters, however, is how this law is applied.

The absence of a civilized procedure for establishing guilt in the trials held in Russia recently indicates that journalists can be gagged by this means more surely than by parliamentary decisions and economic pressure.

During the trial of Novosibirsk businessman Alfred Scholenberg, newspapers reported the following episode. Here is what one of them, *Vecherni Novosibirsk* (Evening Novosibirsk), wrote about it: "On March 16, Scholenberg confirmed that he had given a bribe to judge Zaitsev and demanded his dismissal. His demand was rejected. Moreover, the court ruled that the further hearing of the case should continue with the defendant in absentia because of his contempt of court."

The newspaper did not comment on the decision. It merely stated the facts which took place and were recorded. Nevertheless, judge Zaitsev, who was charged with bribery only by the defendant, felt hurt and brought a suit against six Novosibirsk newspapers which also reported on this incident. The total sum demanded by him for the insult ran to seven and a half million rubles.

A district court already examined one case – against *Vecherni Novosibirsk*. The judge fully confirmed the innocence of his colleague. True, instead of one million, the newspaper was obliged to pay "only" 250,000 rubles to Zaitsev. At present it is the largest sum a newspaper has ever had to pay in similar cases in Russia. True, *Vecherni Novosibirsk* appealed against the district court decision and did not yet pay the money.

Who determines what sum is to be paid for a moral damage inflicted on a person and what criteria are used? There are no lilmits nor criteria here. One court decided that the magazine *Stolitsa* had to pay a compensation of 5,000 rubles for an insult it caused to Vladimir Zhirinovsky, leader of the Liberal Democratic Party, though he demanded 100,000 rubles. The Yaroslavl judges assessed the moral damage suffered by Pamyat (Memory) leader Dmitry Vasiliev from an article in a local newspaper at 40,000 rubles, though he demanded one million. The 8-fold discrepancy is impressive. It is not fair indeed. For some reason the penalty for an undeserved insult to Vladimir Zhirinovsky was "assessed" much cheaper than an insult caused to Dmitry Vasiliev.

In the case of the suit against the newspaper *Den* it will have to pay 100,000 rubles for the moral damage done to Edmund Iodkovsky, editor of the newspaper *Literaturnye Novosti* (Literary News). The "price" of what a journalist might write is set by the person who brings a charge against him. So the court proceeds from the sum asked by a plaintiff. This does not cost him anything, not counting the ten rubles he pays for legal expenses.

New Times has already written that such a way of earning money becomes increasingly popular. Oleg Kazarov, former secretary of the Ulyanovsk regional party committee, won a suit of several thousand rubles against *Simbirsky Kurier* (Simbirsky Courier) because this newspaper described his speech as "scandalous." A KGB officer brought a million-ruble suit against *New Times* and was awarded 10,000 rubles.

After consultations with the Department for Legal Affairs of the Supreme Soviet, the parliamentary Committee for the Mass Media sent the following to the Novosibirsk journalists: "If a suit demands monetary compensation for the moral damage caused by the defendant – a periodical, TV or radio – the plaintiff must pay in advance a duty of 15 percent of the sum required from the defendant." This means that before demanding a million rubles as a compensation, judge Zaitsev would have to pay a duty of 150,000 rubles. I think in this case Zaitsev would not demand such a sum. As far as we know, he does not take bribes. We also know that judges have a low salary. However, Zaitsev paid a duty of ten rubles.

One detail should be mentioned here. Zaitsev is not an ordinary lawyer. He is a member of the regional court, that is, a superior for the district judge who awarded him 250,000 rubles (a small sum compared with what has been quoted before). The appeal of the newspaper *Vecherni Novosibirsk* will be considered by a higher body, the regional court, of which Zaitsev is a member.

The editors of newspapers and magazines against whom suits were brought asked the Russian parliament to change territorial jurisdiction, that is, suits against them should be examined by courts in other regions. "We regard as inadmissible for a civilized society the judicial practice whereby the suits involving large sums filed by judges – who are members of a regional court – are considered and decided by district courts under its control," they wrote in their appeal. "We have no grounds to consider such courts really independent, objective and unbiased."

There was no reply form the parliament, and so the state of affairs will remain unchanged.

Pavel Gutiontov

Amnesty

In the immediate future, 200 thousand convicts will be released. Shall we sleep peacefully?

The road from the zone

After many months of work the Supreme Soviet passed a decree "On Amnesty." This was preceded by hot debate in parliamentary committees, both over the content of the amnesty and on whether it is at all necessary.

Opposers mentioned the growth in the crime rate in the country and the probability of freeing criminals who will repeat their offences. The advocates of the amnesty argued that the repeat offences rate among those amnestied is always much lower than among those released upon serving the entire term. Besides, such enactments have been passed in almost all the republics of the former USSR. Russian citizens have been trailing behind up to this day.

The cold summer of 1953

All of us remember the amnesty of 1953. The ill-thought out and recklessly carried out release of a great number of prisoners who could not be provided with jobs nor housing resulted in an unprecedented jump in crime rate. This formed a stable negative attitude towards amnesties in the population.

The principle of a reasonable minimum was followed in granting subsequent amnesties.

For instance, the amnesty of 1987 affected more than 200 thousand convicts, but only 1.7 percent of them were immediately released (mostly elderly and sick people and mothers of children). The terms of imprisonment were reduced for the overwhelming majority (over 3/4) of those amnestied.

Of course it's impossible to rule out repeat crime even in the case of the most careful approach to the matter. To minimize the risks, it is necessary first of all to outline the sector of people to be pardoned in order to avoid including the most "return-to-crime" categories there.

The initiative of preparing the present amnesty issued from the Committee for Human Rights of the Russian Federation Supreme Soviet. The original draft decree seemed to me unduly broad. In particular, its authors did not find a single category of prisoners who should not be granted amnesty. But did, for instance, those who persistently disobey prison regime deserve pardon? This category was excluded from all amnesties for at least the three last decades.

Some said during the discussion that this category "is created by the administration itself," by way of squaring accounts with the disagreeables. The argument that all decisions by the administration will henceforward be placed under strict control of the Public Prosecutor's Office was rejected because, as they said, the latter would be led by the administration. Then the advocates of a "restricted" amnesty suggested to their opponents the following solution: prisoners should be granted the right to lodge an appeal against the administration's decision concerning their recognition as persistent offenders of prison regime in court.

"What court are you talking about?" exclaimed one of Committee members. "About the court which sent me from the colony to a jail? I can't trust the colony court."

It's hardly right for a people's deputy to distrust all law enforcement bodies of the country – police, penitentiary institutions, the Public Prosecutor's Office, court – for him to mistrust not certain people, but all of them as a whole.

However, the categories of prisoners not granted amnesty were clearly defined by the draft which was forwarded to the Legislation Committee and adopted on June 18. Apart from persistent offenders of regime, 51 categories of prisoners were denied amnesty. These included repeaters, among them those convicted for a number of grave and dangerous crimes, such as banditism, thefts, robbery, plunder, embezzlement of state property, murder, rape, inflicting heavy bodily injury, extortion, bribery, attempts at a policeman's life, car hijacking, malicious hooliganism, drug-related crimes, and some others.

Nor is amnesty extended to those who had been pardoned or amnestied before but who have nevertheless committed a premeditated crime again. He who has once betrayed confidence can't be trusted anymore.

To be released at once or gradually?

A certain part of convicts will be released in the very first months in which the amnesty

goes into effect. This will be the most dangerous period, and the least "risky" contingent should be released during it. The amnesty provides for the priority release of war veterans, women, men over 60 and invalids of the 1st and 2nd degree of disability.

In the case of other categories of convicts, their release depended on the nature of the committed crime, the degree of its graveness (determined by the length of the term), the number of previous convictions and the duration of the term already served. On the one hand, the served time allows to know the convict better and to find out whether he has begun to reform; on the other hand, he should feel the punishment and serve at least part of it.

Apart from release, the amnesty provides for a shortening of the term for a certain section of convicts. The relevant committees started debates over what term should be cut down, that which was established by the court or that which remained to be served by the day of the issue of the amnesty act?

The draft suggested by the Committee for Human Rights provided for a reduction of the set term, which would have led to a quicker release but, and this is the most important thing, which would have increased the number of those released at the same time.

The Supreme Soviet rejected this approach and reduced the rest of the term to be served. This provided for a gradual release of convicts as they serve their shortened terms.

Too early to abolish capital punishment?

One more question was raised during the discussion of the amnesty decree draft, that of substituting 20 years of imprisonment for capital punishment for all sentenced to death. Every year a few hundred people are sentenced to death in our country (for instance, 100 people were sentenced in 1989, 223 in 1990 and 147 in 1991). More than 200 people are awaiting for their fate to be decided this year. All of them are those sentenced for the first degree murder, most of them have killed more than one person. If we bear in mind that, for instance, in 1991 only 144 (5.9%) out of 2,424 persons convicted for the first degree murder were sentenced to death, it becomes clear that these are the most dangerous criminals characterized by extreme cruelty and complete disregard for the rights and lives of other people.

The Supreme Soviet refused to extend amnesty to those sentenced to death.

One of the purposes of the amnesty is to open a prospect to criminals, help them abandon a criminal life. Therefore the amnesty will concern crimes committed before the adoption of the Act by the Supreme Soviet, even if the culprit has not yet been sentenced. But if he committed a crime after June 18, no amnesty will be extended to him.

What about the so-called "continuing crimes" committed before June 18 and will continue till the culprit is found? For instance, escape from custody? A special rule applies to such cases. If a runaway convict voluntarily surrenders to the police or returns to the colony he fled, he is exempt from the responsibility for his flight, in other respects he enjoys the right to amnesty on common grounds.

A few words about the category of convicts whose pardon was actively debated in the press. It includes the so-called "managers," those who committed crimes in the sphere of the economy. The attitude towards this group of crimes has changed during the recent years. Many actions punished under the penal code a few years ago are not punishable today, others entail shorter terms.

We have examined sentences of all those convicted for embezzlement in especially large quantities in one of the penitentiary institutions. As it turns out, the average term of conviction was 9 to eleven years in 1985-86; about 8 years in 1987-88, and 5.5 to 6 years in 1989-91- However, it was not the law that changed during these years, but the policy of handing out punishment.

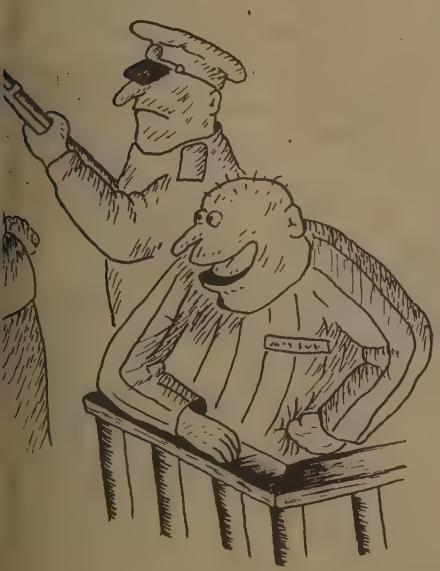
Amnesty was not extended to any of these persons because of the graveness of crimes they committed.

On the whole, the Amnesty Act will ease the lot of over half a million convicts. About 200 thousand will be released, the term of punishment will be reduced for 40 thousand. Amnesty will be extended to 60 thousand having suspended sentences and released on condition of obligatory employment. The rest are those sentenced to punishments other than imprisonment.

During one year after the Amnesty Act of 1987 was adopted, 2,633 people (1.3%) out of the total of the released (200,000) committed crimes again.

Let's hope that the results of the new amnesty won't be worse.

Alexander Mikhlin,
Professor, D.Sc. (Law)



Truth-seeker will remain in jail

Why do we love amnesties so? They were a frequent phenomenon to commemorate any festive occasion. Of course, official dates should be celebrated in a generous fashion, but why necessarily by means of an amnesty? To the best of my judgement, in our system no one was particularly concerned about the fate of a poor prisoner...

Amnesty is a rarely, if at all, practiced thing in a law-governed state with a serious judicial system. Amnesties are not necessary if justice is performed accurately – humanism finds other means of expression. For instance, the US penitentiary system includes psychologists who help settle the problem of earlier release. This is a highly efficient system – a professional psychologist won't be hooked by a prisoner's classical promise to become a nice boy – psychological tests will show his real inclinations.

There are two possible approaches, or principles, in the work of judicial bodies: either the inevitability of punishment is given priority – in this case an innocent person may be imprisoned lest a single criminal avoid punishment. The other, directly opposite principle insists: let nine guilty ones avoid punishment rather than one innocent person be unjustly convicted.

In the same manner, approaches to amnesty may also be different. The final version of the Amnesty Act demands good evaluation reports as condition for a convict's release. No amnesty for "persistent offenders of reformatory regime."

Thus, in spite of all our efforts, the carrying out of amnesty is again entrusted to the penitentiary administration. As a result, apart from hard criminals who really do not yield to reforming, a large percentage of those whom I would call "born truth-seekers" will be deprived of a chance to be released earlier. They are harsh people of principles, who are unable to be on friendly terms with the administration and who enjoy an unquestioned and deserved authority among inmates.

These people would serve their terms in the punishment cell rather than let their neighbour be offended; they won't joke away a correction officer's suggestion to inform on fellow inmates, and spare no foul words to express indignation.

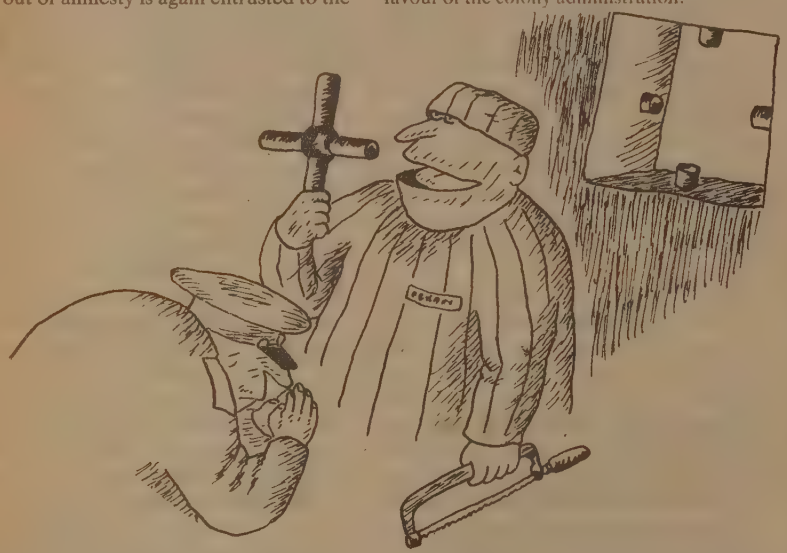
These natural truth-seekers are always on the blacklist, because not infrequently they really are a hindrance to the administration in carrying out reformatory functions. They won't tolerate an informer nearby.

Our opponents argued that evaluation reports are subject to public prosecutor's surveillance. Unfortunately, public prosecutors, especially in the worst penitentiary institutions, always play into the administration's hand...

I think that the most just solution of the problem was found in the original amnesty draft which didn't even mention the question of evaluation reports. Better release a few of those who don't deserve it rather than keep in custody several persons who really deserve freedom...

I wouldn't have completely rejected the possibility of an appeal against not offering amnesty or presenting a negative evaluation report. I would have even defended this item if it had been one more step towards legal reform and not a one-time measure.

What's the use of assizes in the context of this particular amnesty? It will spend 15 minutes on each case given the great quantity of them, and will ultimately pass decision in favour of the colony administration.



Control over the legitimacy of an arrest or of keeping in custody, as a preventive measure, is now, under the new legislation, entrusted to courts and even personally to judges, such as they are today. However, this is a regular practice, and we can count on it gradually becoming effective as the legal system improves. It may even happen rather soon – better laws will make judges better too.

Anyway, I agree that a colony court could give a chance to convicts, it could probably prevent an evil colony boss from making an absurd endorsement in an evaluation report: "...exercises a negative influence on the negative part of the contingent." I raised this issue in the Supreme Soviet myself. But the Supreme Soviet is conservative, and its idea of defence of the rights of convicts is very one-sided.

One more sequence of this circumstance is the great number of crimes not affected by the amnesty, including bribe-taking, although it's well known that the article on bribes often leads to arbitrary decisions by courts and miscarriages of justice. Our criminal investigators make a nice use of one remarkable feature of our legislation – the bribe-receiver is answerable in any case, while the bribe giver is exempt from responsibility if he pleads guilty. Therefore a suspect easily yields to the investigator's blackmail: "If you plead guilty of giving a bribe to the person I will name, you will be free; if you don't, you'll get 5 to 7 years, like he will..." Man is a weak creature and prefers anyone else to be jailed, and the case is closed.

Nor did the amnesty affect car hijackers. There is a hijacking and a hijacking, and I am inclined to think that the anxiety and anger of MPs who have cars has played its role here.

"Managers" are almost completely unaffected by the amnesty.

There are two attitudes here. According to the first, all "managers" are to be released, because there is a great percentage of really enterprising people among them who have committed no crime. For instance, a person started an illicit shop producing consumer goods, but he paid the full price of the raw materials to the state and remunerated his workers well...

Their opponents put forward arguments which seem convincing to me: there are many big-time thieves among "managers" too, who misappropriated truckfuls of goods to sell them to a fence. The applied article is the same, but the cases are absolutely different.

From the point of view of justice, the just solution to the problem is to start a retrial of all such cases. But in the present situation it could drag on for years. These are the two scenarios to choose from. However, this discussion is devoid of any practical implication – the Supreme Soviet wouldn't have allowed a sufficiently broad and effective amnesty for "managers" anyway. The attitude of our MPs to entrepreneurship is known only too well.

In short, both our Committee and the Committee for Legislation had a purely practical approach to the amnesty – simply to make it acceptable to the Supreme Soviet... All the more so because the overwhelming majority of convicts it will affect are mothers of children, juvenile delinquents serving their first time, those who have committed unpremeditated crimes, elderly people and disabled persons, veterans of war. Their release is good in itself.

Sergei Kovalyov,
member of the Russian Federation Supreme Soviet, chairman of the Committee for Human Rights

Drawings by Marat Tairov

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This unusual and rare passion did not appear at once. **Yevgeny Katansky,** 37, was engaged in a long and painful search before he felt his calling for puppet making. At first he studied at the Moscow Literary Institute for five years. But he left it without even receiving the first degree. Then Yevgeny studied at the faculty of feature film directors of the State Institute of Cinematography, but only for two years. He was asked by a friend to give an acting course at the theatrical studio of a house of culture on Prsenya Street. It was difficult to refuse, because the friend had serious family troubles. Yevgeny thought he would teach for a short time. But he worked in the studio for eight years because he developed a liking for the job. However, one day he and his students ceased to understand each other, and he dropped the work of stage managing.

Yevgeny explains his new passion for puppet making in this way: "I wanted to find actors who would never betray their creator." He began to produce puppets guided by his own fantasy, taste and experience.

Would he like to organize his own puppet show? "In principle, I wouldn't, but I have several mini-shows," Yevgeny replies. "It's troublesome to work with puppets as actors, not simply to create them. It takes as much time as is required to make a new doll. For this reason I prefer to produce puppets, not to be a puppet stage manager and puppet-maker simultaneously."

One can hardly expect to see another collection in Moscow that would match the display of puppets at Yevgeny Katansky's workshop. The puppets are made of plastic and wear colourful costumes the artist has fashioned of scraps of material, such as velvet, silk and flannel. Yevgeny claims that he finds the bits in his granny's trunk.

The collection is unique indeed. The puppets move, express moods, laugh, open and close their eyes, and even stick out their tongues. They can also walk forward and backward. But how? The artist keeps this his secret.

"Sometimes it's really heartwrenching for me to say goodbye to a puppet. When I work on a puppet, it comes to life, we become friends and develop a liking for each other," Yevgeny says. But now and then the artist has to part with his puppets as they enjoy great demand. Puppet makers and collectors in Spain, Italy, France, Japan and the United States are frequent guests at his workshop. He continues to produce new friends.

* * *

The Russian stock phrase de-

Press service for the Russian President

The appointment of **Anatoly Krasikov** as head of President Yeltsin's press service has attracted media attention. The establishment of the press service under the general direction of the President's Press Secretary, Vyacheslav Kostikov, is intended to introduce a regular system of Yeltsin's communication with journalists, first of all in the form of his press conferences and briefings by Kostikov, and to organize the journalists accompanying the President during his tours.

Anatoly Krasikov, who was charged with setting up the new press service, is an old hand in journalism. On graduation from the Moscow State Institute of International Relations in 1954, he was offered a job in the Soviet news agency TASS. For nearly four decades Krasikov worked at TASS, passing through all stages of a journalistic career. He headed the TASS offices in Italy and France, and in 1978, he was appointed deputy director-general of the news agency. Krasikov has never tried to ingratiate himself with others. He consistently spoke up in favour of extending democratic principles in public life in the former USSR, and wanted the mass media to carry honest and full information to the people. In the first half of 1991, this led to a sharp conflict with Leonid Kravchenko, then Director-General of TASS. Attempts were made to oust Krasikov from his post. But he was "saved" by the August coup. After the failure of the coup, Leonid Kravchenko himself had to resign.

In the meantime, Krasikov defended his thesis for a doctor's degree in history, and in the spring of 1992, he made up his mind to devote himself to research. But was invited to *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* (Independent Newspaper). Krasikov agreed to head the international department of that newspaper. Shortly afterwards a new offer was made – to head the press service of the Russian President.

Anatoly Krasikov is well known not only in Russia. He left behind many friends wherever he worked. In 1963, during his work in Italy, he became the first Soviet journalist to have been accredited at the Vatican during the Second Vatican/21st Oecumenical Council (1963-1966). He still maintains good relations with prominent Vatican officials.

However, Krasikov is most of all attracted by Spain. Since his first visit to the country, he has admired its nature and entertained warm feelings for its people – straightforward and courageous, despising duplicity and intrigues. He devotes all his free time to the study of Spain and its policy. This is the subject of his thesis for a doctor's degree. In July of this year, he founded and registered an Association for Business and Cultural Ties with Spain and became its President-Coordinator.

At present, he heads Boris Yeltsin's press service. Krasikov wants to make it an effective, dynamic and open institution. In his opinion, the relations between the President's press service and the mass media should be fair and honest.

scribing such people is: "This guy has hands of gold." Just one look at **Alexander Pronin's** wood carvings is enough to convince you that he certainly deserves this appellation.

Fate did not favour Alexander, 33, who was born and bred in Moscow. Having entered the Moscow Theatrical Stage Vocational School, he graduated as a lighting technician. Though the job did not attract him, he worked for ten years, handling spotlights and other lighting equipment. He travelled over half the country with theatres. But his real desire was that of another trade. During his tours of Russia he took a fancy to the ancient art of wood carving. He liked to carve household utensils and odd articles out of shapeless pieces of lime wood, as this type of wood lends itself to carving. Finally he gave up his previous job. Alexander studied in wood-carving workshops, where he perfected his skill. At first he was engaged in carving for his own pleasure, and then for earning a living. He took an interest in carving articles out of citrus wood. Little by little he moved on from making small objects to larger articles. His workshop in downtown Moscow shows lime-tree carvings in the Russian folk style, sometimes drawing its imagery from Russian fairy tales, but more often showing creations of the carver's imagination. Alexander fashions salt shakers, cups and dishes in the form of birds and dragons, funny hedgehogs in a variety of sizes, and a good deal of other functional things. For example, a big dish might be used as a candy or fruit bowl, while a smaller one could serve as a salt cellar. "I have been into fairy tales since I was a child. I've read the tales of the Brothers Grimm and Andersen, and I'm really fond of Russian artist Bilibin's works. But I never took formal training to become a carver; I just took a piece of wood in hand one day and decided I wanted to try carving." He didn't fail. He crafted a mantelpiece at the workshop and a big pine table where he dines his friends and customers. He's been receiving more and more orders for interior decorations for dachas and apartments.

His works have been displayed at the Russian Folk Arts Show.

An actor with standards

This film actor and director is known to millions of cinemagoers in Russia and abroad. His *Earthly Love* (1975) and *The Destiny* (1978) were hits in their day. They have been included in the "Box-Office Hits Club," a term devised by critics for most acclaimed films several years ago. In this club, there are only 22 films which drew audiences of over 50 million during their first year.

Yevgeny Matveyev has gained official and popular recognition. He was awarded the titles of People's Artist of the USSR and the Russian Federation, received state prizes of the USSR and the Russian Federation, was elected People's Deputy, a delegate to a party congress and a secretary of the Film Makers' Union board.

But as *perestroika* began, Yevgeny Matveyev and other famous film actors were pushed into the background. "It was an agonizing experience for me," he says. "Perhaps it was not so much an insult to me personally as the offence I felt for the cause which we served. It seemed to me that young people, talented without doubt, do not have a perspective, do not see for what purpose we live and work. What happened at the Fifth Congress of the Film Makers' Union? Some undertook a reckless attack, trampling over and destroying what had been achieved, declaring themselves champions of *perestroika*, then quickly convening the Sixth Congress and quietly dispersing. Today we are all on the rubble heap. The framework of organization and production has been wrecked. I think human relations have been seriously damaged too. The people who honestly served their cause and the audience have been offended. They now keep silent to maintain their dignity. But their hearts are breaking over what has happened, and each of them talks with his pillow at night."

It seems a reappraisal of values has been started. Recently Yevgeny Matveyev and other veteran film actors received letters. "Excuse us, we have apparently offended you. Please, return to the Film Makers' Union," they say in particular. The letters have been written by film director Sergei Solovyov, the current chairman of the Union.

Matveyev continues to shoot films, play roles in them and meet with cinemagoers. Last year he played the part of Brezhnev in *The Clan*. Previously, he appeared in the role of young Brezhnev, a general, in Yury Ozerov's serial film *Soldiers of Freedom*. "When I was offered again to play the part of the former General Secretary, I refused at first," the actor says. "However, they sent me the script. Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev is shown as a man weak from old age. He has poor sight and dull hearing, and can hardly walk. Probably he also is slow to grasp what's going on. Nevertheless, Leonid Ilyich continues to wear his medals and stars and other decorations. I thought it would be interesting to play the character which could not appear in *Soldiers of Freedom*," Matveyev recalls.

"Quite recently I was offered a fantastic sum for a new role, Brezhnev again," the actor goes on. "But I flatly refused to play it, because I thought many scenes were far-fetched. I do not approve of portraying historical personalities as clowns. It's un-Christian and ugly, for in the past, Brezhnev was praised as 'a very good man.' I don't want to sink below the level I've set for myself."

Yevgeny Matveyev remains a Communist by his convictions. "I've even founded my own party," he says jokingly. "It's called LATYC – not a fine-sounding abbreviation. Let me decipher it: Live According to Your Conscience. I've elected myself chairman of this party. I'm its only member, I pay dues and spend them on my own needs."

A long holiday in 1949

My Prince Charming could not outwit Ali Baba and his forty thieves

"Those who have 'only average' for this school term get your bags and line up," said Lidia Sergeyevna, our form teacher. "And now quick, march to the cloakroom and be off with you! The others will go out into the hall and quietly take their seats."

They will watch a puppet show, *Ali Baba and His Forty Thieves,* which is about to begin. The "only average" girls of Form 1B (in those days there was separate education for boys and girls) drag themselves despondently after the teacher. As we pass through the hall, I try not to look in the direction of the stage, but can't help stealing a glance, as the tears well up in my eyes, at the green spangled curtains and rows of benches on which the "A" pupils fidget impatiently in happy anticipation of the show. My bag weighs heavily on my arm with the "only average" for maths in my school report. It is the only poor mark for this quarter term, but it has deprived me of the puppet show and spoiled my forthcoming winter holiday. There is one week left before the New Year of 1949.

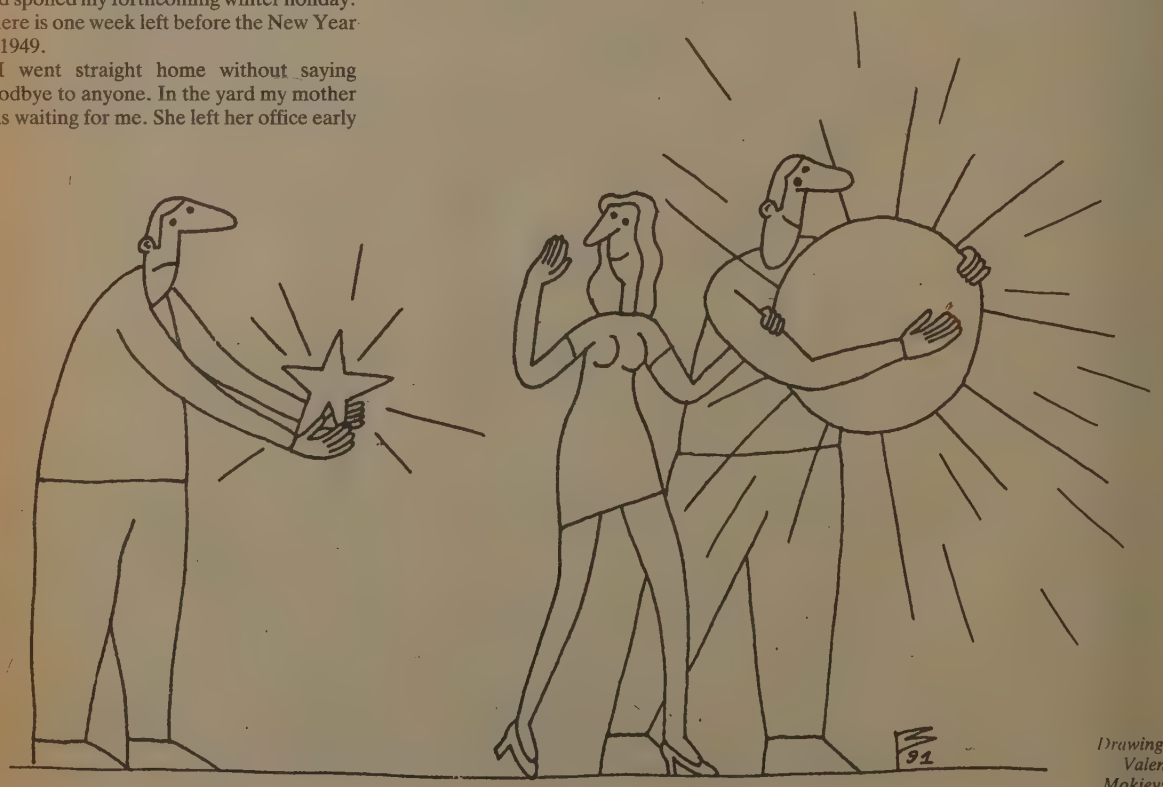
I went straight home without saying goodbye to anyone. In the yard my mother was waiting for me. She left her office early for the occasion. Seeing my dejected face she started fussing over me – what's wrong? I produced my school report, showed her my marks and told her everything. The next day my mum came back from work, put her bag on the table and asked me: "Guess what's in it?" She had a selection of tickets, all kinds – to the theatre and for New Year's shows. The New Year's celebration began, involving Granny, Grandad, Mother herself and even her friends. Mum was to take me to the musical comedy, Grandad to the opera house, Granny to the drama theatre and several New Year's shows.

"Happy New Year, my beloved land, my glorious country!" read the golden letters on the ticket to the Young Pioneer Club. There was also a picture of the New Year of 1949, showing a boy in a fur coat and cap skiing to meet the Old Year, with a knapsack on his back. One could read the title of the book sticking out of the knapsack: *Timur and his Team.* I never tired of studying the New Year's show tickets.

"Have a good look at your ticket
"In the bright light of your lamp.
"Now put out the lights, and lo!
"A lovely Christmas tree will spring to life!"

These verses were printed on the back side of the New Year's show ticket to the Hall of Columns, the most favoured show among Moscow children. The front cover featured a red-cheeked bright-eyed Young Pioneer wearing a red tie, white shirt and blue shorts, and holding a flaming star in his hands. Crimson banner, crimson star, crimson tie, and crimson cheeks radiated optimism and a festive atmosphere.

The holiday began in the morning. I went out to play in the yard taking my ticket along to show my friends. They showed theirs and we compared them – whose is the prettier. One day I brought along my very best ticket to boast to the kids in the yard. It was the one for the New Year's show in the Central Artistes Club. It was a cute, fancy ticket – when you opened it, a Christmas tree sprang up decorated with



Drawing by Valentin Mokievsky

garlands, wild animals ran out of the woods, and Father Frost rode out in a sledge with a Snow Maiden. And soaring over all this was Stalin's face in the star-spangled sky. Everybody admired the ticket.

"Let me have a look," asked Yurka Gavrilov, the boy next door. I had a crush on him from the moment he came back home from a cadet school for the holiday.

I readily gave him the ticket. The other boys crowded around him discussing something in whispers.

"Come here," Yurka called me. He was standing near the entrance door. "Lick the handle, will you."

"What for?"

"Just do it, you'll know what for."

I hesitated.

"Go ahead, lick it! You'll like it. It's sweet. We've just licked it too."

I was eager to please him, so I licked the icy steel handle in the severe frost and my tongue stuck to the steel right away.

The boys guffawed and ran away. I tore my tongue from the handle leaving blood stains on it, and went home forgetting about the ticket and the New Year's show. In the afternoon, when Granny reminded me to get dressed for the outing, I realized I'd have to miss this one -- Yurka ran away with my ticket. I told them that I lost the ticket and went to bed. I crawled under the blanket, head and all, and sobbed my heart out. I cried for a long time wetting my pillow and finally fell asleep. The next day there was another New Year's show, and not just any old one but one at the Hall of Columns.

In those days they let you bring your parents along. My heart missed a beat when holding Granny by the hand as I entered the enormous hall where soft music was playing and large snow flakes danced in the semi-darkness. We took our seats and looked around enchanted with the magic snowfall and talking in whisper. Suddenly the lights went up and the MC announced in a loud voice that the show would now start. My favourite number was the Butterfly Dance. A dancer in a white fluffy tutu sailed out onto the stage. She spun around, and with each turn her tutu changed colour – blue, chocolate, multi-coloured, yellow... The spotlight followed the dancer colouring her wings a different colour with every movement, extracting gasps of admiration from the enthusiastic audience. The spotlight went off and the dancer's tutu was plain white again.

There was another number I was always looking forward to: the "Nanai fight." Two dwarfs locked in each other's embrace tried to pin each other to the floor by hook or by crook. They moved about the stage, fell down, jumped to their feet, drove each other into the corner, and rolled on the floor. The audience cheered, the children clapped their hands and jumped from their seats, encouraging the fighters. Suddenly one of the fighters got up waving his felt boots in the air for the last time and disappeared – instead of the two Nanais there was one young man, dishevelled and flushed, with familiar felt boots on both his hands and his feet. There was a startled pause followed by a stormy applause. No matter how often they performed this trick, the effect was invariably the same – supporting cheers, startled silence, and stormy applause.

After the show the children went running to the huge Christmas tree to witness the ceremony of lighting it up. Father Frost's thunderous voice commanded: "One, two, three – go!" He stamped his stick and the lights went up. A chorus of children's voices cried: "Hurray!" and the round dance began. Father Frost asked if anyone wanted to recite a poem. Of course I did! I knew a lot of poems by heart and would have happily recited them for hours.

Father Frost picked me up in his arms and got me a present from the tree. Next came the dance. I was always dressed as a Snowflake for New Year's parties: a white skirt and white crown. And I would try to dance gracefully imitating the circling snowflakes. Once at some New Year's ball a prince came up to me and asked me for a dance. He was dressed in tights and a golden jacket with a small golden crown on his head. We spent the whole evening together, and then went to get our presents from Father Frost. My paper packet tore and the contents rolled out onto the floor – tangerines and candy and honey cakes. He rushed to collect them for me.

In the cloak room my prince put my things on the looking glass table and went to get his coat. I felt like a Cinderella. I was so excited I couldn't get my hands into the sleeves. Hurry up, you fool! He's waiting! At last I was ready. But where's the prince? I turned round and saw a tall slender girl with a familiar face.

"My name's Tanya," she said offering me her hand.

"This is your prince," a tall woman, Tanya's spitting image, explained laughing. We moved towards the exit. Tanya was saying something to me, but I barely listened, completely shattered.

Quite often my winter holidays were prolonged because of one illness or another. At the end of the holiday I would suddenly develop a sore throat, or ear inflammation and a fever. I'd happily go to bed. One day I found myself standing on the table pointing at the wall and whispering: "A red bow! Look, a red bow on the wall!" My mother and Granny were frightened stiff. "Don't contradict her," Granny urged Mother. "When a child is delirious, you must never contradict her." I don 't remember what happened next. Later I learnt that I had scarlet fever. Children's diseases are a joy. A slight fever and some dizziness, and your mother stays at home to take care of you, she dotes on you, worries about you, makes you hot drinks and applies mustard plasters. Illness means that they will be reading books to you and when the temperature goes down, they will let you have books and albums and pencils in your bed. Illness means they give you sweet syrup for your cough, prescribed by the local doctor called Bukharina, a wonderful children's doctor, a kindly tired-looking elderly woman. She suddenly disappeared forever in the early 1950s. As I learnt later, she was arrested because of her unfortunate name, although she was not related to the like-named "enemy of the people."

While I was ill in bed, I tried to sort out what I'd seen during the holidays, but my head was a muddle. I remembered *The Twelve Months* and *The Blue Bird,* because I had watched these plays a hundred times and was never tired of them. In *The Blue Bird,* I liked best the Other World and the Sneezing Nose played by a young woman with a running red nose who was sneezing constantly. In *The Twelve Months* I liked the Storyteller in his striped pants, who came out to the forestage before each act repeating some silly meaningless incantation, and jumping in a funny way. I also recalled the play called *Snowball* that I had seen at the Children's Theatre with Granny. Snowball was the nickname of a little Black slave boy, downtrodden and neglected. He was cruelly mistreated by his ruthless owners in America. How I wished to save the boy, to rescue him from America, bring him to my Moscow home, take care of him and comfort him. On our way home Granny and I cursed America and discussed plans of saving the little black boy.

What else did I see? I remember how Grandad and I took wrong seats in the theatre and how, to my horror, Grandad jumped lightly over two rows of seats to get to his rightful place. He suggested I did the same, but I started getting out of the wrong row stamping on people's feet utterly embarrassed. What was it we saw that time? I can't remember. I try to sort out my memories and invariably I see the school hall, the green spangled curtains, and the poster with stylized lettering: *Ali Baba and his Forty Thieves,* the most interesting, the most desirable, and the most inaccessible show – the forbidden fruit of my childhood.

Larisa Miller

Her workplace is by the ring

"I've never wanted to hit anyone," says Russia's only female boxing referee. The sight of senseless fighting disgusts her

Now Lyudmila Ivanovna Glebova is busy looking for sponsors and co-founders, go-getting and "making decisions," in short, she is engrossed in the usual bustle of a Russian entrepreneur. Her business isn't run-of-the-mill. It doesn't tally with this charming, intelligent and seemingly mild lady. She and the Moscow Boxing Federation, such an odd couple! Yes, it's rather unexpected, that is untill you know something about Russia's only female boxing referee. By the way, there was a period in her life when she was also the world's only representative of the fair sex in the presidium of a national boxing federation.

For the last two decades Lyudmila Glebova's workplace has been by the ring. Usually she works as a referee-commentator, although sometimes she acted also as a side referee. The latter occupation is easier. Unlike his colleagues in the ring and side referees, the referee-commentator watches each and every fight, while the other referees rotate. For instance, a referee works at 4 fights out of 24, whereas a commentator, at all of them without exception.

But is it really so difficult to say "in the red corner...," "in the blue corner..."? Not so easy, as it turns out.

For instance, a well-known boxer, a reputed master, is apparently loosing the first round to his contender. Commentary can affect the boxer's status, even if he doesn't hear your words through the audience's raucous hooting. Does this mean that one should keep silent between rounds? Well, Lyudmila Glebova has her own tricks of the trade. She can say something like the following: "Boxer so-and-so has won so many fights, but his best victories lie ahead..." Or she may say something intended to cool down the atmosphere or to the contrary, something aimed at electrifying the already revved up audience.

Her work is not limited to the role of narrator with expertise nor of a lightning rod for the audience's undesirable emotions.

Sometimes her word is decisive in naming the winner, as was the case at the championship in Moscow. When the fight was over, notes from the side referees came with an evident mistake in one of them (she can see the notes, because she sits next to the main referee). She hesitated, and they began urging her to announce the victor, but she said: "Wait a bit and let's have a closer look." And here it dawned upon one of the referees that one of his colleagues failed to take into account a reprimand given to a boxer, which changed the score from 3:2 to 2:3, thus making the loser the winner. The referee-commentator turned out to be more attentive than other referees.

Such situations strengthen her reputation. She is consulted, her opinion is taken into account. But where could all this knoweledge come from along with the understanding of the subtleties of this traditionally male sport, of the boxer's psychology?

The job of a referee in boxing competitions proved so absorbing to Lyudmila Glebova that it became sort of her second life

Now, 20 years later, she smiles when she recollects that first day which initiated her unique career. That day she had no reason to laugh – the contender was clobbering with all his strength her son who followed his father's footsteps and became a boxer too. Could a mother endure this? She even broke into tears.

Her husband Vladimir Grachev, now a revered coach of Russia, recollects that when he saw her crying he came up to her and said in a rather harsh way: "Try to understand it, first, and then make conclusions." At first Lyudmila didn't understand what he meant, and her pride was hurt – what's so difficult to understand? It turned out later that she had failed to grasp the situation: her son was winning the fight...

She began to take a keen interest in Vladimir's coaching skill, wanting to understand each detail. She began to study it seriously, unlike some referees who are usually former boxers or coaches. In addition, she had a personal tutor, her husband, who instructed her and explained to her all the intricacies of this purely male sport.

So what is boxing to her now? Is it a sport, a job, a way of life or her entire world? At one time, recalls Lyudmila Glebova, it was a family hobby, then it became her job, a hard one. Now it is part of her life, perhaps.

When a married couple shares professional interests, this often strengthens family ties and leads to a constant and lively exchange of thoughts, ideas and knowledge. This is precisely the case of the Glebova and Grachev family. Their joint efforts to create the Moscow Federation of Boxing is one more evidence to this.

The idea at once filled the spouses with enthusiasm. The Federation should be an entreprise with limited liability! It should not exist at the expense of a sponsor, but earn its subsistance by sport. The Federation should be open to sportsmen, referees, veterans and the press. Lyudmila Glebova had to spend a long time on working out its statute, which added to her knowledge of law. She's been recommended as a candidate for vice-presidency of the Federation.

Her work in sport, among sportsmen, as a referee beneficiently influenced Lyudmila Glebova. According to her own confession, she began to notice new qualities in herself which she hadn't had earlier, for instance, restraint, the ability to soberly assess events and to avoid hasty assessments. She says that a purely female perception of the world has disappeared. During these years she has learnt to compose herself quickly, like a sportsman, to make instantaneous assessments of situations and to react immediately. You can't imagine how useful it is in certain everyday situations, she says.

To conclude I asked her, having apologized for the question which might seem tactless to her: "Have you ever had the desire to hit anyone?"

"A lot of times – me!" laughs Vladimir.

"Never actually," says Lyudmila firmly. "Aggressiveness and anger are not among my character traits."

Generally speaking, according to surveys by experts, a peaceful disposition is boxers' salient feature. They are calm and show restraint in their personal life; as a rule, they are aggressive only in the ring.

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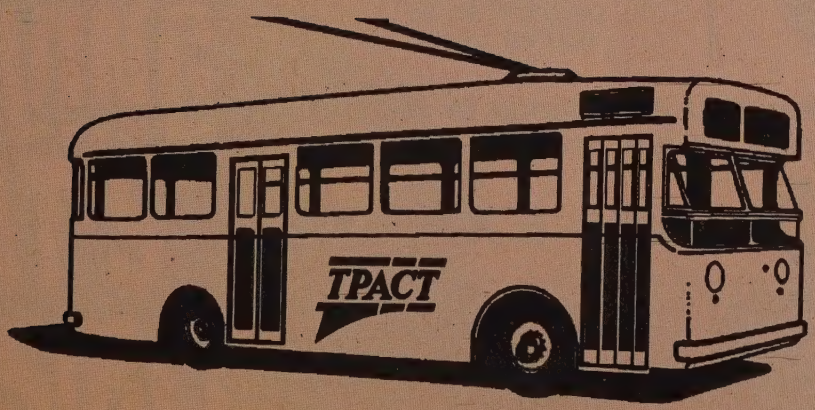

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